RESEARCH REPORT

A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING A MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND FINANCE SERIES

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The three levels of government in Canada—federal, provincial and territorial, and municipal—have been continuously involved in housing policy since the Second World War. However, their relative roles are changing.

In the aftermath of the war, the initiative lay with the federal government. The establishment of CMHC in 1946 and later the development of provincial housing corporations, focused public policy on improving the affordability, adequacy and suitability of the Canadian housing stock. The array of senior government programs generated a substantial portfolio of social housing units, which continues to be subsidized by senior governments. As part of this evolution, a few of the "Big Cities" established municipal non-profit housing corporations—generating their own social housing portfolios.

During this period, municipal housing studies and strategies focused on identifying housing needs and determining backlogs, which were used to rationalize funding and unit allocations from senior governments. The larger municipalities began playing a more active role by developing their own mechanisms—including planning and regulatory tools—to facilitate the development of affordable housing.

In the early 1990s, the federal and most provincial governments withdrew funding for new social housing. Only British Columbia and Quebec continued with active social housing programs.

This has prompted a shift in the municipal role from a local administrator of senior government funded social Housing to a partner in the planning and provision of affordable housing.

Municipalities have considerable resources to bring to this partnership. First of all, they are in an excellent position to bring on board the wide range of community interests—including public and private sector providers and community-based organizations—that could contribute to addressing local housing affordability needs. Secondly, local governments have control over policy areas that can have a significant impact on housing affordability, including land availability, zoning regulations, development fees, property taxes, and so on.

These considerations have led to an increasing level of municipal interest and activity in promoting affordable housing, often employing innovative partnerships and tools. In somecases, municipalities are gradually evolving affordable housing strategies in response to specific issues as they emerge. An example of such an "organic" strategy is the City of Vancouver, which has adopted a wide range of initiatives to improve affordability for specific target groups over many years of strong population growth.

Affordability Issues

Because incomes have remained stagnant or declined for so many households over the last 10 years, affordability problems have been aggravated for many Canadians. Specific housing affordability issues include:

Homelessness: This is the most high-profile housing issue in the country today. According to a 1999 study by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, there may be 200,000 homeless people within urban Canada on any night.

Lack of affordable rental housing stock: The 1996 Census showed that 43 per cent of the nations' four million rental households were paying over 30 per cent of their income for rent. The apartment vacancy rate is now below one per cent in Ottawa, Toronto and Kitchener. It is below three per cent in Québec City, Montréal, Calgary, Regina, Vancouver and Victoria. This suggests an urgent need for large numbers of low-cost rental units. With few exceptions, however, most communities in Canada are seeing very little rental housing being built. Meanwhile, demolitions, up-scale renovation and conversion of existing rental stock to condominiums are chipping away at the existing rental stock.

Non-elderly bachelor apartments for low-income singles: Some resort municipalities have escalating house prices and a lack of lower-income housing supply for service-sector employees. Rural municipalities, such as those with growing numbers of low-paying tertiary jobs in the resource sector, may be faced with insufficient affordable housing due to a lack of market opportunities. Larger urban municipalities may also have a shortage of affordable rental housing for low-income singles.

Student needs: Affordable rental housing may be lacking in communities with post-secondary educational institutions and significant student populations, for example, Fredericton, a city of 50,000 people that is home to 10,000 students. The needs of students differ from other people in the community and the eight-month period of peak demand results in special challenges to provide this type of housing. Given funding constraints at colleges and universities, little new on-campus housing is built resulting in significant demand for the private sector to provide appropriate housing.

The need to preserve and rehabilitate the older housing stock: Older housing stock in inner cities has traditionally provided opportunities for affordable rental and home ownership. In some cities, however, this stock is in poor condition and needs to be rehabilitated. In other cities, rising prices and gentrification are putting these homes out of reach of lower-income citizens.

Housing in proximity to services: The growing population of "empty nesters" in some communities such as Halifax is increasing demand for apartment units in proximity to downtown commercial districts where a wide variety of services and amenities are available.

Aboriginal population housing needs: Many of Canada's Aboriginal people are poorly housed. This is a particularly common housing issue for Prairie municipalities and those in northern areas, where Aboriginals form a significant proportion of the overall municipal population and, in some instances, the homeless population.

The increasing need for supportive housing: Specially designed housing and a range of support services are required by a variety of groups, including seniors (particularly those over 75 years of age), persons with physical illnesses, those with complex mental health problems, substance misusers, ex-offenders, and victims of abuse. This is increasingly a problem in smaller municipalities with fewer resources, and one particularly recognized in British Columbia.

In other cases, however, municipalities are exploring a more systematic strategy characterized by goal setting, data gathering, formulation of integrated action plans, implementation and monitoring. It is this experience that this Guidebook draws upon. The purpose of the Guidebook is to provide detailed advice to municipal officials and other housing stakeholders on how to develop such strategies.

What is a Municipal Affordable Housing Strategy?

A municipal affordable housing strategy is a systematic approach to addressing local housing issues. It provides the community with an opportunity to discuss housing in its broad social development context and reach a consensus (or at least a widely-supported decision) on what should be done in order to ensure that housing needs are being met. By undertaking a municipal affordable housing strategy, the community can inventory the available resources for dealing with housing issues, weigh the broad range of actions open to them, assign responsibility for action to municipal and community-based agencies and identify those actions and policy changes that they wili demand from senior levels of government. An affordable housing strategy is developed with public consultation throughout the process.

The box lists the key elements of a municipal affordable housing strategy. There are two basic types of municipal affordable housing strategies: focused and comprehensive.

Key elements of a municipal affordable housing strategy

- steering committee that plays a leadership role in developing the strategy
- public consultation and communication process
- analysis of housing needs and identification of key issues
- assessment of policy options available and adoption of action plans to address key issues
- implementation strategies, including the development of new partnerships
- monitoring of progress towards achieving goals and addressing key issues.

Focused Municipal Affordable Housing Strategies

Focused strategies are those that respond to one or two particular affordability issues using a limited set of tools. In many cases, a focused approach is the most appropriate one, especially in smaller municipalities with resource constraints or where political attention is focused on a single important issue that requires urgent intervention.

Focused strategies can be divided into those that represent a community-based response to a perceived housing need and those that are prompted by senior government funding or legislative requirements. Examples of the community-based strategies include those adopted in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Calgary (see box).

Community-based, focused strategies

Neighbourhood Action in Winnipeg
In the city of Winnipeg, a housing strategy was prompted by a number of factors, including community-based action in response to significant decline in inner city neighbourhoods and a mayor who recognized housing as an important quality of life issue. The result was funding from three levels of government for the Winnipeg Housing and Homeless Initiative.

Source: Planning and Land Use Division, Property and Development Services Department, City of Winnipeg.
Contact: Urban Planning Co-ordinator, tel.: (204) 986-5044.

Community Partnerships in Saskatoon
In Saskatoon, tight housing market conditions and a worsening of housing conditions in inner city neighbourhoods prompted the City to facilitate the creation of the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP). This is a broad-based group of government, private sector and community-based organizations that provides financing and technical support for the acquisition and development of low-income community-based housing. The City's main interest is to promote community development by building on the capacity of the community to respond to perceived problems. SHIP is a direct outcome of that strategy, focuses on generating new methods of financing affordable housing. Family housing is seen as the greatest need.

Source: City Planning Branch. Community Services Department. City of Saskatoon.
Contact: Housing Facilitator, tel.: (306) 975-7666.

Corporate Action in Calgary
In Calgary, a private sector response to homelessness issues triggered municipal involvement. The recent very high growth rate in Calgary pushed up land prices, resulting in building primarily at the top end of the market. Thus, the strong demand for affordable housing, notably low-end affordable rental housing, was unmet. In mid-1997, with a shortage of housing for the influx of workers in the booming economy, business and community interests started to address the issue of homelessness. It resulted in a municipal strategy called the Community Action Plan—Reducing Homelessness in Calgary.

Source: Policy and Planning, Corporate Properties, City of Calgary.
Contact: Manager, tel.: (403) 268-5759.

Of those municipal affordable housing strategies that are being undertaken in response to senior government initiatives, most are being prompted by the Federal Homelessness Initiative and, in particular, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiatives (SCPI) component.

Announced in December 1999, SCPI funding is targeted to facilitating the development of a community plan to address homelessness. The plan must look at absolute homelessness as a first priority and then can extend to relative homelessness and prevention-oriented responses. The absolutely homeless are those who are without housing and are living in the streets or in emergency shelters. The relatively homeless are those who are living in housing that is beyond what they can afford or which is unsafe or overcrowded. The Greater Vancouver Regional District is one jurisdiction that has developed a focused affordable housing strategy in response to SCPI (see box).

Other municipalities are developing housing strategies in response to prompts from provincial and territorial, governments. This is especially the case in B.C., where during the last decade the Province has adopted legislation to empower, fund and facilitate municipal affordable housing strategies. The Province has also released a variety of model bylaws and planning guides in support of the legislation.

As a result, 48 local governments in B.C. currently have housing strategies, over twice the number that did in 1996. Most of these strategies are of the focused type. For instance, Golden has a strategy that specifically addresses the need for affordable rental housing in the community. The City of North Vancouver's housing strategy focuses on the needs of lower-income residents, especially families and special needs groups.

Comprehensive Municipal Affordable Housing Strategies

The examples above show that municipalities in Canada are adopting a wide range of strategies focused on particular affordability issues. However, recently some municipalities in Canada (and the U.S.) have begun developing more comprehensive approaches to housing affordability strategies.

Like focused strategies, these comprehensive ones address local housing issues using a systematic framework of analysis, implementation mechanisms and monitoring. Unlike focused strategies, however, they attempt to address the full range of affordability issues facing the community. They are therefore much more ambitious undertakings.

Focused strategies triggered by senior government initiatives

Greater Vancouver SCPI Plan

The purpose of the regional plan is to identify policies and actions that can be implemented throughout the region by all levels of government, and private and non-profit sectors to alleviate homelessness issues in Greater Vancouver. It addresses the needs of absolute homeless and individuals "at risk of homelessness."

The process for developing the plan involved:

- developing guiding principles for the plan and ratifying them
- holding a stakeholder working session to elicit community input on urgent, short-term and long-term priorities
- creating an inventory of existing services and facilities serving homeless people in the region
- identifying gaps in services and facilities serving the homeless
- obtaining preliminary evidence of need through a review of existing reports and studies, and contacts with key informants throughout the region
- identifying critical issues and developing policies and strategies to address those issues
- obtaining stakeholder feedback on the draft plan.

Source: *Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver,* March 2001. Available from: Strategic Planning Department, Greater Vancouver Regional District, tel.: (604) 432-6375.

As with focused strategies, comprehensive strategies are being triggered by a range of causes. In B.C., a few municipalities—including Coquitlam and New Westminster—have responded to the Province's supportive legislative framework by developing comprehensive strategies (see box).

Comprehensive strategies linked to senior government action

The City of Coquitlam

Coquitlam has adopted a strategy of short-and long-term actions to encourage the development of affordable, rental and special needs housing. The City plans to use new tools such as density bonusing, housing agreements and an affordable housing reserve fund.

The City of New Westminster

New Westminster has also developed a comprehensive housing strategy. The strategy was developed through an extensive research and public consultation process that resulted in recommendations addressing seven key issues, including market housing, innovative and cost effective housing, and growth management.

Source: www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/housing/PLANHOUSE/2000_plan.htm

The B.C. government is also requiring rapidly growing regional districts to prepare Regional Growth Strategies dealing with population and employment growth, transportation, environment and housing (among other issues). In some districts, such as the Capital Regional District, which includes a number of municipalities in the Victoria area, this may prompt the development of a comprehensive affordable housing strategy.

In Ontario, many municipalities undertook comprehensive studies of their housing needs in the 1980s as a condition of receiving senior government funds for social housing. In the 1990s, some municipalities in Ontario began updating their housing studies and linking them to a range of municipal implementation measures. For instance, the Region of Waterloo's Housing Statement Update will investigate the full range of housing types in the area; determine community housing supply, needs and demand; and identify and research housing-related issues such as student housing, homelessness, and supportive housing.

Another stimulus for the creation of comprehensive strategies in Ontario was the October, *1998 Report of the Provincial Task Force on Homelessness.* The report suggested that municipalities take on the role of local service systems managers and develop a comprehensive community plan for this purpose. In Ottawa, for example, a housing strategy and community action plan was developed in 1999-2000 and covers a full range of housing affordability issues.

In some cities, the official planning process has provided a convenient context for developing comprehensive affordable housing strategies. In the aftermath of Toronto's amalgamation, for instance, a comprehensive strategy was announced in conjunction with the new official plan (see box).

Comprehensive strategies linked to an official plan

An Affordable Housing Strategy for Toronto

The recently amalgamated City of Toronto may soon launch a comprehensive affordable housing strategy linked to the development of its first official plan. A framework document for developing a strategy was adopted by Council in 1998. It identified seven functional areas in which the City could take action as part of an affordable housing strategy. These included:

- leadership in establishing partnerships
- financing and funding
- taxation
- charges and fees
- community supports
- regulations and standards
- planning and policy.

Part of the City's affordable housing strategy is already in place. The new "Let's Build" program is a supply strategy based on demonstration projects in which the City partners with a range of other stakeholders to build new affordable housing units. The projects (two of which have already been built) focus on three distinct streams:

- transition housing
- affordable rental
- affordable home ownership.

Sources: City of Toronto. *Framework for the New Official Plan, March 1999; Toronto at the Crossroads: Shaping our Future),* 2000. Available from:
www.city.toronto.on.ca/torontoplan
Contact: Information Officer (416) 392-1264.

In the U.S., the Department of Housing and Urban Development requires municipalities to prepare a Consolidated Plan as a condition of receiving financial aid for housing. Boulder's Comprehensive Housing Strategy, developed as part of its consolidated plan, is described in the box.

Comprehensive strategies in the U.S.

Boulder, Colorado: Comprehensive Housing Strategy

Affordable housing was a key theme in the Boulder consolidated plan (1998-1999). The planning process began with a look at community demographics, regional employment and growth projections, the cost and availability of housing and a summary of Boulder's current housing programs. A Strategy Group of about 40 people was tapped for its ideas about the best approaches to gain more affordable housing. Two public workshops contributed ideas and potential solutions.

Staff took the ideas of the first public meeting along with those generated by the Strategy Group and wrote a report called *A Tool Kit of Housing Options.* The booklet describes and evaluates over 60 possible actions to improve the affordability of Boulder's Housing stock. The Comprehensive Housing Strategy includes more than 30 measures and today Boulder has a Housing Implementation and Funding Task Force as well as a rigorous monitoring plan.

Source: City of Boulder. *Comprehensive Housing Strategy,* 1999. Available from: City of Boulder, Department of Housing and Human Services, tel.: (303) 441-4195.

Benefits of a Comprehensive Affordable Housing Strategy

Although a comprehensive approach requires more time and resources than more focused or "organic" approaches, it offers considerable benefits as well. A comprehensive approach to local housing issues can generate the best match between needs and resources because it is based on a thorough assessment of the two sides of the equation. This process can reduce duplication, exploit potential synergies among different tools used and identify gaps that need filling. It therefore leads to greater efficiencies in dealing with on-going problems than would a more focused approach.

A comprehensive strategy also offers the benefit of a long-term policy framework, for example, a system with some stability rather than an ever-changing set of programs and policies. The strategy is not a short-term reaction to specific problems, but rather is a thought-through approach that has "buy-in" from all sectors of the community. Public acceptance of the strategy and its goals is eased by the fact that the strategy is based on a thorough and objective assessment of affordable housing needs in the community. Its ongoing relevance is improved by systematic monitoring of results and modification to the strategy as necessary.

Furthermore, a comprehensive affordable housing strategy can help to improve the overall social health of a community. Many working in community services (police, health workers, social service providers and educators) feel that there is a direct relationship between the quality and availability of appropriate housing in a community, and the well-being and functional capacity of the community.

A comprehensive approach to meeting local affordable housing needs can "fit" well into other strategic goals of the community. For instance, it can form an essential part of a more broadly defined housing strategy that covers issues not directly related to affordability.

At an even broader level, an affordable housing strategy can serve as a "plank" in a community's sustainability "platform." For instance an affordable housing strategy can be an essential support for inner-city revitalization by laying out strategies for the rehabilitation of older housing stock and whole neighbourhoods.

An affordable housing strategy can also work in parallel with transportation and land use strategies designed to reduce commuting from home to work, encourage higher density development along transit corridors, and check sprawl. Québec City's housing strategy incorporates an affordability component and provides a good example of an effort to place housing provision in the larger context of sustainable development (see box).

From an economic point of view, a comprehensive affordable housing strategy can help ensure that housing opportunities are available to match the needs of workers as local economies grow or change. A better match between housing opportunities and the labour needs of employers can attract new investment in a community and provide greater economic stability. An affordable housing strategy may also trigger local economic activity in housing construction. Finally, it can reduce public expenditures on ad hoc measures such as emergency shelters and improve public finances by expanding the tax base and the pool of revenue from development charges.

Overview of the Guidebook and the Strategy Development Process

The purpose of this Guidebook is to give municipalities interested in adopting an affordable housing strategy a detailed account of how to go about doing so.

When a local government decides to undertake a municipal affordable housing strategy, it will be confronted by a wide array of possibilities, resource constraints and decisions to make. Obviously, no guidebook could anticipate the specific needs of every local community in navigating these possibilities and constraints. However, a book on this topic can offer general guidance and a series of steps that can be followed to a degree or adapted to the local situation. This is the purpose this Guidebook is intended to serve.

Strengths of a comprehensive affordable housing strategy

Québec City's Housing Strategy

The City of Québec adopted a housing strategy in November 2000. The strategy has a number of goals, including improving housing affordability in the city, especially for middle- and low-income groups. It takes a wide-angle view by placing housing needs in the context of sustainable development, for example, a healthy community with a high quality of life, controlling urban sprawl, promoting public transit, ensuring access to green space and revitalizing old neighbourhoods.

After reporting on the background studies (socio-economic, housing, trends, etc.) and establishing a vision of desired urban conditions, the document provides a mission statement, discusses fundamental issues, values and goals related to housing conditions and needs. The document identifies three areas of intervention in housing:

- housing development and aid to homeowners,
- the renovation and maintenance of the existing building stock, and
- social housing.

It specifies what actions will be taken, addresses the financial support needed, and identifies likely partnerships and other resources (financial, human, physical, etc.) available to meet desired policy goals. It then looks at issues related to the quality of urban life and housing on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis.

Source: Ville de Québec. Division de l'aménagement du territoire, Centre de développement économique et urbain. *Politique d'habitation.* Novembre, 2000. Available at: **www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/fr/commhtml/622.html**

The advice offered in this Guidebook is based on a number of principles:

- The emphasis is on process not content; for example, there is little information here on specific tools that could be adopted as part of the strategy.
- It is strongly oriented towards a model in which municipalities take an important role, however, a successful local strategy may require support from senior levels of government.
- The recommended process relies heavily on a consultative and partnership model that can bring into play the full range of community stakeholders and their respective resources.
- It proposes a systematic approach that has the potential to achieve positive results while using public resources sparingly and to their best effect.

The chapters in the Guidebook are arranged along functional lines, meaning that different aspects of the strategy development process are described as separate topics. These functional topics are:

- preparation and administrative set-up
- assessment of affordable housing needs
- planning and conducting a public participation process
- developing action plans
- implementing the strategy
- building partnerships
- monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

Each of these functional topics is explained in a step-by-step method that includes brief case studies to illustrate how municipalities are proceeding in concrete situations. However, it is important to note that the chapters are not arranged in a chronologically sequential order, that is, earlier chapters do not necessarily represent functions that are completed before those functions covered in later chapters. In fact, many of the steps described in the various chapters will be occurring simultaneously. For instance, building partnerships, as well as public participation, may have started even before the strategy development process was formally launched, and may continue throughout that process and into the implementation phase.

How a municipality organizes the various functional aspects of an affordable housing strategy development process into a sequence of specific research activities, consultation events, negotiations with partners and decision points will correspond to local needs and conditions. Thus, it would be presumptuous to offer a single schedule or template for undertaking a strategy development and implementation process. However, it may be useful for readers to see how the various steps in carrying out the functional elements of a strategy could fit together into one continuous process. On this assumption, the following table offers one potential model for organizing the key steps that go into preparing and implementing an affordable housing strategy. This is the model that underlies the information given in the Guidebook.

Overview of the strategy development process

Preparation	Develop a Public Participation Plan	Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	Conduct a Needs Analysis	Consult Community on Goals and Key Issues	Create Action Plans
- appoint a Strategy Coordinator - establish a Strategy Development Task Force and sub-committees - develop Terms of Reference, including statement of goals and key issues - develop time line and budget - assemble resources	- identify participants - develop a consultation and communication schedule - choose consultation and communication methods - prepare background documents	- set up a sub-committee to design the monitoring program - ensure that the needs analysis and the action planning process are structured with the needs of the monitoring program in mind	- assemble a database on current housing market, demographic and socio-economic characteristics - assess future housing needs and determine housing shortfall - prioritize needs and refine key issues.	- hold a community forum in order to gather input into the goals and key issues as developed by the Task Force and through the needs assessment study - finalize statement of goals and key issues	- create a sub-committee to work on each key issue - for each key issue assess what has already been done - identify options and choose tools for addressing each key issue - set specific objectives, targets and responsibilities for each tool - lay out resources needed to implement each tool
Integrate Action Plans into a Draft Strategy	**Consult the Community on Draft Strategy**	**Finalize and Adopt Strategy**	**Implement Strategy**	**Build Partnerships**	**Monitor and Adapt Strategy**
- eliminate duplication, inconsistencies among the various action plans and integrate action plans into a preliminary Draft Strategy - circulate the Draft Strategy to the affected departments for comments - adjust the document and forward the Draft Strategy to Council	- organize a well-publicized community forum to discuss and receive comments on the Draft Strategy - provide opportunity for written briefs - publish a consultation report summarizing presentations and written briefs	- make final changes to the Draft Strategy - send the Final Strategy along with a recommendation to adopt and fund the strategy to Council - Council approves the Final Strategy, allocates resources for implementation, and sets up a body to oversee implementation	- prepare an implementation schedule - prepare a budget and organize administrative resources - assign responsibilities - put in place an implementation-stage communications campaign	- identify need for partners based on action plan objectives - identify partners - structure partnerships using partnership agreements - implement partnership agreements	- finalize design of the monitoring program - select performance measures - create a monitoring and reporting schedule - collect monitoring data - report monitoring results - revise the action plans and/or targets

Resources

- B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, *British Columbia's Strategy for Affordable Housing,* 1996.
  Available from Web site
  www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/programs/housing.htm

- B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, *Planning for Housing 2000.*
  A comprehensive overview of housing strategies in the province. Includes zoning, planning, funding strategies and a good section on homelessness.
  Available at Web site
  www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/housing/PLANHOUSE/2000_index.htm

- Societé de l'habitation du Québec. *Government Action in Housing: Strategies and Plan of Action,* 2000. This document articulates provincial policy regarding affordable housing. It is a policy document of strategies and actions.
  Available at Web site
  www.shq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/pu/M04269.pdf

- Edward Starr. *The Municipal Role in Meeting Ontario's Affordable Housing Needs. A Handbook for Preparing a Community Strategy for Affordable Housing,* 2001. It takes a broad look at municipal housing strategies in Ontario with a step-by-step overview for assisting planners in developing affordable housing strategies.
  Available from the Ontario Planners Institute, tel.: 1800 668-1448;
  Web site **www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/**

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). *Municipal Government Perspective on Housing,* 1998. National policy position of the FCM regarding housing. A policy and strategy document.
  Available at Web site **www.fcm.ca/**

- Steve Pomeroy. *Municipalities Providing New Leadership in Affordable Housing,* 1999. Describes the Toronto Task Force and the National Housing Policy Options Team and their efforts to solve the problem of an insufficient stock of affordable housing using creative methods. Provides case studies in Vancouver, Toronto, Prince Albert, Montréal and Kamloops. Can be ordered from ICURR (for member municipalities only) at tel.: (416) 973-1326
  Web site **www.icurr.ca/english/**

Chapter 2: Preparation

Introduction

Developing an affordable housing strategy can be a time-consuming, resource intensive process. Setting up appropriate administrative mechanisms, gathering resources and laying out the terms of reference can help ensure that the strategy is keyed to local conditions and that available resources.

Steps to Preparing to Undertake an Affordable Housing Strategy

Getting ready to undertake a strategy can involve the following steps:

- appoint a Strategy Coordinator
- develop terms of reference and set up a Strategy Development Task Force
- identify resources.

Appoint a Strategy Coordinator

Council should appoint a Strategy Coordinator to help launch the process of developing the affordable housing strategy and to provide administrative support as it proceeds. The role of the Coordinator will be to:

- oversee the development of the terms of reference for the strategy
- help propose members of the Strategy Development Task Force and its sub-committees (see below)
- serve as a secretariat for facilitating record keeping, information flow and the follow-up of decisions
- oversee the contracting out of any aspect of the strategy development process
- assist in fact finding, producing materials and handling day-to-day administrative aspects of the process
- oversee the preparation of key documents and background reports.

The person chosen for this role should be well acquainted with the various municipal departments that will be involved in the strategy development process, for example, planning, housing, building, real estate/property, finance, legal services and community services. Municipalities unable to dedicate a full position may consider combining this responsibility with an existing position.

Establish a Strategy Development Task Force

A Strategy Development Task Force may be set up in order to guide the whole strategy development process. This is a multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder committee responsible for identifying local needs and co-operatively working on action plans and implementation programs. Its main purposes are:

- map out the strategy development process within the parameters given by Council
- put in motion the various main tasks involved in developing a strategy, for example, a public participation plan, a needs assessment, a framework for developing action plans, an implementation plan, and a monitoring and evaluation system
- encourage or broker the formation of partnerships that can help implement the strategy
- guide the process as the strategy develops
- make recommendations to Council in the form of a proposed affordable housing strategy.

Housing Strategy Task Forces

London's Affordable Housing Task Force

London's Affordable Housing Task Force was set up in 1999. The goal was to identify municipal initiatives to increase the long-term supply of affordable housing. The Task Force garnered ideas for its recommendations from the wider community through a public forum, the programs of other municipalities, the strategies and reports prepared by various housing advocacy groups and the submissions of individual Task Force members.

The final report and recommendations of the Task Force went to Council in July of 2000. At that time, the Council requested a further consultation with the public. This was held in September 2000 and did not result in substantial changes to the report. The Task Force's report was finalized in early 2001. Its recommendations were then refined and prioritized by municipal staff for submission to Council.

Source: *City of London Affordable Housing Task Force Report*, 2000. Available from: Housing Planner, Department of Planning and Development, City of London, tel.: (519) 661-5900; Web site **http://www.city.london.on.ca/housinglondon/reports/repaffhouse.htm**

On it should sit key stakeholders such as:

- municipal councillors and/or the Mayor
- a cross section of local stakeholders, including public, private and non-profit housing industry representatives
- staff from a wide range of municipal departments with technical expertise in-need assessment, various measures or tools, communication and so on
- representatives of the social groups most likely to benefit from the implementation of the strategy.

Council and/or the Strategy Co-ordinator in consultation with the broader community could propose members of the Strategy Development Task Force. Each member should have strong communications ability, be able to work in a team setting, have good negotiating skills and the respect of their colleagues or "constituency."

Develop Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference sets out the basic parameters of the strategy development process and serves as a guide to participants as the process unfolds. It is an essential document that could be drafted by a committee of Council or the Strategy Development Task Force before being forwarded to Council for approval. It may include:

- statement of goals and basic principles (mandate)
- membership and structure of the Strategy Development Task Force
- roles and responsibilities of the various participants
- definition of basic terms
- time line and budget for developing the strategy.

Statement of goals, key issues and basic principles
A statement of goals and basic principles expresses the purposes and values animating the strategy development process. These need to be clearly articulated so that they can act as a touchstone to help keep participants on track and help resolve conflicts and debates as the strategy is developed. It may include:

- a preliminary statement of the key issues to be addressed by the strategy, including the main affordability problems in the community and the key target groups
- a preliminary statement of the substantive goals of the strategy in terms of desired outcomes (for example, provide adequate housing to all income sectors, create a healthier community, improve the local economy, promote social equity and diversity)
- a list of the procedural principles to be used in the development of the strategy (such as, inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability).

The statement will be important in later phases of strategy development to help guide the affordable housing needs assessment (see Chapter 3–Needs Assessment) and serve as a basis for public consultation on the key issues and goals of the strategy (see Chapter 4–Public Participation).

Composition and structure of the Strategy Development Task Force

The Terms of Reference should lay out the membership of the Strategy Development Task Force and an organizational structure for undertaking the strategy. Task Forces may have several dozen members and therefore may require a committee structure. If so, members could be assigned to working groups, for example, process, resources and administration, needs assessment, public participation, action plans, implementation and monitoring. If a smaller Task Force membership is desired as a tightly knit steering committee, people to staff the sub-committees could be recruited from outside the main Task Force itself.

Terms of Reference

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing in Regina

In March 2000, the City of Regina established the Terms of Reference for the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing. The document covered the following elements:

- Mandate (to address four key issues: suburban housing, downtown housing, inner city housing and student housing)
- Structure (an Advisory Committee with four sub-committees, one on each of the key issues)
- Membership (34 members, including a six-person Advisory Committee and about seven people on each of the sub-committees)
- Administrative support (from the Community Services Department)
- Process (including sub-committee structure, research and public participation requirements)
- Time frame (six months from set up to final report)
- Reporting arrangements (sub-committees report to Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee sends final report to Mayor, Mayor presents to Council, etc.)

The Terms of Reference included a Background Paper that provided a rationale for the Committee and laid out the key issues to be addressed.

Source: Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing in Regina, City of Regina. Terms of Reference, March, 2000.
Available from: Housing Co-ordinator, Community Services Department, tel.: (306) 777-7533.

Roles and process
All participants need a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The Terms of Reference should define these at the outset to ensure all participants will know what is expected of them. The main categories of participants include:

- Council
- the Strategy Development Task Force and its sub-committees
- the Strategy Coordinator other levels of government (regional, provincial and territorial, federal)
- key community and corporate stakeholders involved in local housing production and policy issues.

The Terms of Reference should set out clear guidelines on "process", including the flow of information, reporting channels, decision-making, and so on. For instance, Task Force sub-committees should report to the Strategy Development Task Force, which in turn should report to the Mayor or a committee of Council, which will then bring recommendations before Council. Some mention should be made of how the recommendations emerging from the process will be treated by Council.

This guide assumes that the municipality will be playing a leading role in developing and implementing the strategy, in association with stakeholders and partners in the community and senior levels of government. However, in some cases, a community-led strategy will be more appropriate, especially in smaller communities or where municipal resources are limited. A community-led strategy may be led by a coalition of community groups with the municipality acting as more of a facilitator or partner than a leader. In this case, the primary function of the Strategy Development Task Force will not be to advise Council, but to create a "place" where the municipality and other stakeholders can work together on building a strategy. This understanding should be made explicit in the Terms of Reference.

Definitions of basic terms
The Terms of Reference may also be used to define basic terms, such as "affordable housing" and "affordability." The definition of affordability used by Canadian municipalities is often based on a definition used by CMHC. This says that to be affordable, housing costs must consume no more than 30 per cent of household income. The income threshold to which the term applies is usually defined in relation to income distribution in the region (see box).

Time line and budget for strategy development
The time frame used by the municipality to develop its affordable housing strategy will need to correspond to local realities, including:

- the electoral cycle and the priority given to the strategy by the current Council
- the availability of staff and community resources to put into developing the strategy
- the thoroughness of the needs assessment to be carried out
- the complexity of the public participation process in terms of the range of participants and the number of consultation events
- the degree of controversy or conflict involved in developing the strategy.

Undertaking a comprehensive strategy can vary from a few months to up to two years.

Some examples:

- the City of Québec took two years to develop its strategy
- Nanaimo took one year to develop its strategy and submit it for approval to Council
- it is anticipated that the Toronto strategy will take about 18 months to develop once the decision to undertake is made
- Regina developed its housing strategy over a period of six months
- it took 10 months to develop Boulder's draft strategy.

Some aspects of the strategy development process can take place in overlapping time frames. The table shows one possible model for conducting the various aspects of strategy development over a one-year period.

Definitions of Affordable Housing

City of North Vancouver

"Affordable" is defined as housing costs that do not exceed 30% of gross annual household incomes for city residents whose incomes are below the Lower Mainland Income Ceiling levels established annually by (BCHMC) British Columbia Housing Management Commission in conjunction with CMHC for specific unit sizes (see below).

"Affordable housing" means housing which is affordable to households of low and moderate incomes, targeted to those whose incomes and family sizes meet the income thresholds annually set by BCHMC/CMHC for the Lower Mainland.

1999 Income Thresholds - Lower Mainland

Bachelor	1 Bdrm	2 Bdrm	3 Bdrm
$24,500	$27,500	$34,000	$39,500

Contact: Social Planner, City of North Vancouver, tel.: (604) 985-7761.

Ottawa-Carleton

"Affordable housing" is defined as costing no more than 30% of a household's gross monthly income.

Affordable housing policies are targeted to households up to the 30th income percentile for the region.

Affordable home ownership policies are targeted to households up to the 60th income percentile for the region and is calculated on the basis of a three-year average of the three-year mortgage rate, taxes at 1.5 per cent of house price, and a down payment of 10 per cent.

Sources: Developmental Services Department, Research and Technical Services, Ottawa-Carleton. 1999 *Annual Housing Review*, 1999; *Ottawa-Carleton Official Plan*, April 1999. Both available from: Client Service Centre, City of Ottawa, tel.: (613) 580-2424).

One-year time frame for developing an affordable housing strategy												
	Month											
Function	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Preparation												
Develop Public Participation Plan												
Design Monitoring Program												
Conduct Communication Campaign												=>
Conduct Needs Assessment												
Conduct Consultation Events												
Draft Action Plans												
Finalize and Adopt Strategy												
Implement and Monitor Strategy												=>
Build Partnerships												=>

The budget for developing the affordable housing strategy should include the following items:

- in-house staff position and administrative support resources
- external consultants (see box)
- resources for the communication campaign and consultation events
- data collection costs and staff time for the needs assessment
- data collection costs and staff time for designing and setting up a monitoring program
- costs of publishing and distributing background reports, the draft and final strategy documents.

The overall cost of developing the strategy will depend on a number of factors including:

- the range of issues to be addressed
- the ambitiousness of the monitoring program
- the size of the municipality
- the complexity of the needs assessment
- the number and size of client/target groups.

It would be difficult to conduct a strategy with a budget of less than $25,000 (2001 dollars) under any circumstances; large cities undertaking ambitious strategies should expect to spend $150,000 or more.

Identify Resources Available for Developing the Strategy

In developing a comprehensive affordable housing strategy, significant commitments of resources may be necessary in order to support the following functions:

- administrative support
- public consultation events and a communications campaign
- needs analysis
- research support for assessing options for action
- setting up and undertaking a long-term monitoring program

Before setting out, the municipality should inventory the resources it may have at its disposal for developing its strategy. This includes:

- human resources
- financial resources
- research, technical advice and guidebooks.

Human resources
Human resources include the municipal staff dedicated to housing and the housing expertise that may be found in the wider community.

Large municipalities often have staff working exclusively on housing policy development and implementation. For instance, in Toronto there is the Toronto Housing Authority and the Toronto Housing Company. In Vancouver, the Housing Centre is a department of the Community Services Group. In Montréal, the City's Housing Department has a large complement of staff, as do some para-municipal organizations and the municipal social housing agency. This pool of specialized staff probably equips the municipality to carry out most or all of the research, consultation and monitoring tasks required in strategy development.

However, in smaller municipalities, housing-related work is often fragmented across several departments, such as planning, social and community services, and property development. Officials may be handling housing matters ancillary to other functions. These municipalities may not have the specialized staff resources needed to develop key elements of the strategy.

Tasks that may be undertaken by an external consultant

Conduct the needs assessment:
- quantify affordable housing needs
- identify the range of housing choices available within the municipality
- assess the shortfall
- discuss housing issues relevant to different client need groups.

Assist with the public consultation process:
- facilitate public consultation events
- write summary reports.

Assist in the evaluation of proposed action plans:
- evaluate the implications of the municipality's existing housing policies in its community plan and its housing strategy (if one exists)
- identify the range of options through which the municipality can address housing needs, and provide an assessment of the pros and cons of using specific tools.

Assist with the creation of a long-term monitoring framework:
- design the framework
- suggest performance measures
- explore data sources.

Consultants typically charge $500-$800 per day. The consulting budget could range from $15,000 to $100,000 (and over) depending on the scope of the project, size of municipality and tasks involved.

Community members also form part of the informal network of human resource available for developing a strategy. Many municipalities have housing task forces, housing advisory committees, or social planning advisory committees—all of which might have considerable expertise on housing matters—already in place. And further expertise may be available within the community such as among private or non-profit housing providers and developers, support service providers, representatives of business (such as, finance, real estate), or in the social service sector.

Municipalities that do not have the expertise either on staff or available through existing community networks may want to hire one or more consultants to carry out certain aspects of the strategy (see box).

Financial resources

Municipalities should explore funding sources to assist in the preparation of municipal affordable housing strategies. Through its Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) fund, the federal government is providing financial support for research and planning activities undertaken in the development of a community plan with respect to homelessness. The plan must:

- be inclusive and based upon broad community input/consultation and validation
- identify matching funds from the province and elsewhere
- look at absolute homelessness as the first priority but can extend to relative homelessness and prevention-oriented responses (following a "continuum of supports" model)
- focus on areas of most need (geographically and substantively)
- include activities that are sustainable.

Provincial governments often provide grants to municipalities to assist in the preparation of community plans, many of which include reference to affordable housing. Beyond this, some provinces provide grants specifically directed towards the creation of housing studies or strategies. For instance, in B.C., the provincial government provides grants for housing studies to municipalities and regional districts through its Housing Study Grants program. In Saskatchewan, the provincial government is helping to fund housing facilitator/coordinator positions in Regina and Prince Albert. These positions have been developed to either help facilitate the development of a plan or carry out the recommendations of a housing plan and to work with community groups to develop housing initiatives.

There may also be local foundations and other non-governmental organizations that provide funding for certain aspects of the strategy development process, such as the housing needs analysis. For example, the B.C. Real Estate Foundation may provide some support to municipalities in B.C. Residents in Coquitlam, Port Moody and Port Coquitlam set up the Tri-Cities Social Development Council, which carried out a housing needs analysis for their area with funding provided by the United Way, the Coquitlam Share Association and the Vancouver Foundation.

Research, technical advice and guidebooks
At the federal level, CMHC's Research Division has undertaken an extensive research and information transfer program relating to housing affordability. A partial list of recent publications appears in the box.

At the provincial level, B.C. has been very active in providing information resources to local governments relating to the provision of affordable housing. Besides having published a guidebook on developing community-housing policies (see Resources section), the province's Web site provides a selection of planning tools, including a variety of Planning Guides for Local Government.

Some provincial governments have adopted housing strategies, which can help provide a policy context for municipalities undertaking their own strategies along with direction on potential partnerships with the province. In 1993, The government of British Columbia adopted a broad housing policy. Quebec adopted a housing strategy in 1997, as did Saskatchewan (see Resources section).

In addition, some stakeholder organizations have taken initiatives independent of government. In 2001, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (an affiliate of the Canadian Institute of Planners) created a guide called *The Municipal Role in Meeting Ontario's Affordable Housing Needs: A Handbook for Preparing a Community Strategy For Affordable Housing.*

Research, technical advice and guidebooks

CMHC reports on Affordable Housing

- *The Role of Public-Private Partnerships in Producing Affordable Housing - Assessment of the U.S. Experience and Lessons for Canada.* 1998.
- *Guide to Affordable Housing Partnerships in Canada.* 1998.
- *New Ways to Create Affordable Housing.* 1998.
- *Strategies for Improving Housing Affordability: Survey of Canadian Non-Profit Organizations.* 1995.
- *Municipal Regulatory Initiatives: Providing for Affordable Housing.* 1999.
- *The Nature, Applicability and Potential of Housing Trust Funds in Canada.* 2000.
- *Public-Private Partnerships in Municipal Infrastructure - Theory and Practice.* 1995.
- *Affordable Housing Solutions - Fifteen Successful Projects.* 1999.
- *Municipal Planning for Affordable Housing.* 2000.
- *Background Research on Philanthropic Support for Affordable Housing.* 2000.
- *Municipal Planning for Affordable Housing.* 2000.
- *Homeownership Education and Counselling (HEC): An Examination of U.S. Experience and its Relevance for Canada.* 2000.

Source:
www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/Library/index.cfm

Potential Problems and Solutions

Resource constraints
The reality of many municipalities in Canada is that resources for strategic processes are in short supply. Thus, it is important to have a realistic assessment of the internal and external resources available for undertaking the strategy, tailor the scope of the strategy to fit those resources, and to use resources as efficiently as possible in undertaking the strategy. Before hiring professional experts, make optimal use of expert volunteer assistance or train staff/community members to fill specific roles. Borrow from the experience and expertise of other municipalities.

Developing a multi-disciplinary task force can be a challenge.
Individuals bring their own agendas, their own language and feelings of "turf" to a multi-disciplinary group. One way to build cohesion in such a group is to begin with a visioning or brain-storming session based on the statement of basic principles. Provide time for group members to get to know each other and find similarities and commonalities. However, it is also important to recognize that the real strength of such a group is in the different perspectives each can bring to the issue.

Checklist for Success

Get a champion
A strong committed individual can inspire new ways of looking at things. Many communities that have successful affordable housing strategies have been launched by one "prime mover."

Attract opinion leaders
People with stature of voice in the community should be sought out to endorse the basic principles in the Terms of Reference and make things happen.

Use a transparent process
The process should be transparent and consultations should take place while options are still open. Clear ground rules should be set concerning how decisions will be made during the strategy development process and what information will be shared and how.

Ensure inter-departmental cooperation
Take steps to secure the active involvement and "buy-in" of staff and heads in the various departments linked to the development of the strategy. Short-circuit departmental rivalry.

Resources

- B.C. Housing. *Affordable Housing Builds Strong Communities: Developing Community Housing Policies,* 1992. Now out of print.

- B.C. Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security. *Affordable Housing Strategy,* 1996. Established a series of goals and strategies for meeting the housing needs of B.C. residents.
  Available at Web site
  www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/housing/STRATEGY/index.htm

- Société d'habitation du Québec. *Government Action in Housing: Strategies and Plan of Action,* 1997.
  Available at web site
  www.shq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/pu/puindh00.html

- Saskatchewan Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. *Investing in People and Communities - A Housing Policy Framework for Saskatchewan People,* September, 1997.
  Available from Tim Gross, Manager, Housing Policy, tel.: (306) 787-7288
  e-mail: **TGross@mah.gov.sk.ca**

Chapter 3: Needs Assessment

Introduction

Each municipality differs in the range of the affordability problems it faces and in the ability of its housing market to meet those needs. In order to help identify those housing needs that will be addressed through an affordable housing strategy, the municipality will need to be properly informed of the current housing situation and emerging trends.

Benefits of a Needs Assessment

- Ensures that everyone involved in developing the housing strategy starts out with a clear and shared understanding of the problems that the housing strategy is meant to address.
- Helps identify the gaps in housing and related support service needs.
- Provides a means to identify the most pressing needs and a framework within which to prioritize those needs for attention.
- Assists in directing the allocation of limited resources to the most effective actions in the context of the local housing market.
- Besides providing a solid basis for an affordable housing strategy, the information gathered during a needs assessment can be used to develop a community profile for other policy or research purposes.
- Helps in establishing housing goals and targets for the community.
- Provides an opportunity for consultation and review.
- Facilitates the co-ordination of public, private and community resources to address housing needs.
- Provides the municipality with a management tool.
- Once the strategy has been implemented, the needs assessment data can be used as a baseline with which to monitor change and the effectiveness of the projects and programs in meeting the goals of the strategy (see Chapter 8 - Evaluation and Monitoring).

The needs assessment is a technical exercise conducted by City staff (or an outside consultant) with whatever assistance community stakeholders can provide. It helps guide the strategy development process by assembling a detailed and well-supported picture of affordability issues. It usually relies on a preliminary assessment of key issues (see Chapter 2 - Preparation) and then proceeds to flesh out the true dimensions of those issues by gathering and analyzing data from a wide range of sources. The results of the needs assessment can be used to help inform a wider consultation on the goals of the affordable housing strategy (see Chapter 4 - Public Participation).

Steps to Assess Affordable Housing Needs

The Terms of Reference for the strategy will provide a preliminary statement of the main goals and basic principles for the strategy development process. This statement should be used to guide the parameters of the needs assessment, including a formulation of the key issues or client groups that will be the subject of the assessment. The needs assessment may be designed under the direction of the Strategy Development Task Force (or a sub-committee), and the actual work may be carried out by municipal staff or an external consultant.

An assessment can be conducted in the following steps:

- assemble a database on the current housing market, demographic and socio-economic characteristics
- assess future housing needs and determine housing shortfall
- prioritize needs and identify key issues.

Examples of needs assessments

City of Boulder

Boulder, Colorado commissioned an outside consultant to do a "Housing Needs Assessment" as part of its comprehensive housing strategy. The assessment provided baseline information on a full range of housing and socio-demographic variables and a housing inventory. The study showed that 6,500 non-student households were paying more than 30% of their income for housing, and that a great majority of these households had annual incomes below $40,000. Thus, this population was most at risk of being forced out of the community as housing costs escalated. The study also showed that 3,000 jobs were going unfilled, due in part to a lack of affordable housing for employees.

Source: City of Boulder. *Comprehensive Housing Strategy,* 1999. Available from the Department of Housing and Human Services, tel.: (303) 441-4195; e-mail: **housingstrat@ci.boulder.co.us**

City of Nanaimo

The City of Nanaimo commissioned a consulting firm to undertake its Housing Needs Assessment in 1999. The study analyzed the housing needs of several groups: low-income singles, homeless, youth, low-income seniors, and those with special needs, including women who were victims of family violence and the mentally ill. Families were excluded from the study, as market conditions in Nanaimo in the late nineties had increased access to ownership and rental housing for this group. For each of the target groups, the report:

- provided a current assessment of the need for non-market and affordable housing
- identified the shelter choices available within Nanaimo
- assessed the shortfall
- evaluated the implications of the City's housing policies in Plan Nanaimo and the City's previous (1993) housing strategy
- discussed issues relevant to each of the groups.

Source: Strategic Planning Department, City of Nanaimo. Contact: Social Planner, City of Nanaimo, tel.: (250) 755-4483.

Assemble a Database on Current Housing Market, Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics

The first step in undertaking an affordability needs analysis is to develop a community profile by assembling data on the housing supply and demand within the municipality or, if it is a focused strategy, in relation to the target population. This involves assessment of the current trends in housing within the municipality and includes gathering data on the existing housing stock and socio-demographic trends. This assessment will provide a basis for determining future housing requirements and issues.

Data types

It is important to collect basic present-day data against which future demand data can be compared. For a comprehensive needs analysis, the baseline data should include:

- Housing data: characteristics of the local housing stock (type and tenure, occupied stock, total housing stock, land supply); historical starts and completions activity (residential building permits, historical demolition permits); characteristics of the rental market (historical vacancy rate and average rents by housing type); the amount of handicapped-accessible housing available in the community; and real estate data

(new and existing house price data, inventory of new completed and unoccupied units, absorption rates and listings of existing homes). Data on land supply, serviced and unserviced is also critical in terms of calculating future needs.

- Socio-economic data: including household variables such as incomes (renters and owners), size and type (including breakdown of family versus non-family and family type), population characteristics such as age and sex, and data on specific groups that may have special housing needs such as those with disabilities or seniors. Data on labour force, education, and social characteristics (including proportion of income benefit recipients) will also be helpful.

For a focused needs analysis, variables related to the critical issues or target groups are collected and presented in the context of the overall housing market conditions. For each target group, the baseline data should include:

- Housing data: the present supply of housing for the group, such as number of units/beds, tenure options, type of facility and quality of housing. For special needs groups, qualitative information such as location relative to transportation and other services, and types of social support and health care services available.
- Socio-economic data: the size and relevant characteristics of the group, such as age, income, independent versus supportive living needs, related health/disabilities, and cultural background.

Data sources

Municipalities can use local sources of information along with data from Statistics Canada, CMHC and provincial departments in assembling their baseline information. The table lists data types and sources.

Statistics Canada: The National Census is undertaken every five years, and provides a comprehensive and reliable source of data on a wide variety of factors related to housing market issues. It allows variables to be cross-classified, permitting detailed analysis. The disadvantage of Census data is that many cross-classifications can only be obtained via custom tabulations, at a minimum cost of $900. However, Statistics Canada does offer an inexpensive standard series of cross-classifications known as Basic Summary Tabulations that are available for a wide range of geographic areas at a base price of $60.

CMHC: CMHC's new Housing in Canada electronic database is a comprehensive source of information on key demographic and socio-economic variables matched to comprehensive housing data. The database allows municipal officials or other users to track trends in housing conditions in their community over last 10-15 years. The cost of the CD varies depending on the geographical scope of the information required. CMHC also conducts a Rental Market Survey each October in over 70 larger municipalities across Canada. It provides detailed information on vacancies and rental rates in the purpose-built rental housing stock. Finally, the Corporation recently pilot tested the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), which will allow municipalities and their partners (for example, shelters) to track the homeless populations within their jurisdictions. CMHC has subsequently transferred the ongoing management and administration of HIFIS to the National Secretariat on Homelessness.

Data types and sources	
Data Type	***Data Source***
Housing stock by type and tenure; age and condition	CMHC; Statistics Canada; Municipal data
Land supply	Municipal data
Starts and completions	CMHC
Building permits	Statistics Canada; Municipal data
Demolition permits	Municipal data
New house price	Statistics Canada; CMHC; provincial assessment
Existing house price	Local real estate board; provincial property assessment agency
Lot prices	Statistics Canada; CMHC; local real estate board
Inventory of completed and unsold houses	CMHC
Listings of existing homes	Local real estate board
Vacancy rate and average rent	CMHC; local newspapers
Household income distribution by renters and owners	Statistics Canada
Households by size and type	Statistics Canada
Population by age and sex	Statistics Canada
Population with disabilities	Statistics Canada; Provincial Stats
Seniors population	Statistics Canada; Provincial Stats
Migration data	Statistics Canada; Provincial Stats
Labour force characteristics	Statistics Canada
Education statistics	Provincial Stats; Statistics Canada
Crime statistics	Provincial Stats; Statistics Canada
Income benefit recipients	Provincial Stats; Statistics Canada

Source: *Developing Housing Policy in Small Communities and Municipalities: Handbook and Workshop Series.* Sponsored by the Capital Region Housing Corporation and the B.C. Real Estate Foundation, and prepared by Urban Aspects Consulting Group Ltd. 1998. Available from: Capital Region Housing Corporation, Victoria, tel.: (250) 388-6422.

Provincial and Territorial agencies: Within each province or territory there are a number of provincial and territorial agencies that may have data of interest to a municipality working on a housing needs assessment. An example is provincial and territorial property assessment agencies, which collect a consistent set of data on housing characteristics and prices. The data is organized into municipal jurisdictions and broken down into assessment categories. Municipalities can often request information tabulated according to their specific needs, although there may be a charge for this service in some provinces and territories. Other provincial and territorial agencies that can be approached for data include those with responsibility for social services, health, education and labour and immigration. Some provincial and territorial agencies (such as, housing, health or social services) also can provide data on assisted housing stock for different client groups by municipality.

Municipal sources: Local governments that have established inventories of housing stock in their community (for example, Coquitlam, B.C. has a computer-based inventory of its complete housing stock) can keep their inventory current by regularly monitoring building permit activity and modifying the database accordingly. Other municipalities limit their inventories to the rental housing stock. For example, Calgary conducts an annual Civic Census, modelled on CMHC's Housing Outlook information. The census deals with rental stock and conversion activity and provides good base data on population shifts and demographics. Municipal planning or building departments also often keep records relating to land supply and building permits. Some of the housing and socio-economic data required for a needs analysis may have already been collected by the municipality in the context of a community planning process. Quality of Life reporting systems can provide another source of pre-existing data (see box). Pre-existing data may have to be retabulated or updated for purpose of the needs analysis.

Local real estate boards: These can be a useful source of historical and current housing market information relating to existing house prices, sales and activity.

Newspapers: Local governments may monitor newspaper ads in an effort to understand the functioning of the local housing market. The Resort Municipality of Whistler for example monitors the local newspapers on a weekly basis and maintains a database incorporating published information on vacancies and rents. Monitoring rental markets in this way may be a labour intensive exercise, depending on the size of the local government and the size of the rental sector.

Quality of life indicators

Winnipeg Quality of Life Indicators

In 2000, Winnipeg developed a new set of Quality of Life Indicators in order to help focus the City's housing strategy on priority neighbourhoods. The primary indicators related to the neighbourhood level included: residential rental dwellings; median market value; low-income cut-off; average age of effective dwellings; crime; employment. The secondary set of indicators covered housing conditions. City data sources were used to compile the indicators.

Source: Planning and Land Use Division, Property and Development Services Department, City of Winnipeg. Contact: Urban Planning Co-ordinator, City of Winnipeg, tel.: (204) 986-5044.

Saskatoon's Neighbourhood Profiles

In addition to such quantitative indicators, some municipalities are also developing qualitative indicators. For example, as part of the needs assessment for its housing strategy, Saskatoon created neighbourhood profiles going back 17 years (six census years). Data for quantitative indicators was gathered from sources such as Statistics Canada tabulations on population and housing. Qualitative indicators were developed in order to complement the quantitative profile and provide a deeper understanding of trends in the neighbourhoods. The qualitative indicators focus on satisfaction in terms of quality of life.

Source: City Planning Branch, Community Services Department, City of Saskatoon. Contact: Housing Facilitator, City of Saskatoon, tel.: (306) 975-7666.

Community organizations: Community housing providers and service agencies working with the special needs and hard to house target populations

are a key source of quantitative and qualitative information on population groups not covered by traditional data sources. Much of this information is not rigorously collected by agencies strapped for resources, but there is an increasing trend to collecting this data more systematically. Housing registries and wait lists are also useful information sources, although one should be cautious in using the data as there is often duplication as clients will put their name on more than one waiting list (in order to increase their chances of finding accommodation). A survey of service providers (to identify and quantify the services currently provided in the community, the level of service use and services that will be needed in future) is also a useful way to gather information from community organizations. The Nanaimo Housing Needs Assessment, for example, incorporated information collected by community groups and service providers.

Assess Future Needs for Affordable Housing and Determine Shortfall

A future needs assessment should include:

- an analysis of the demand for housing among the client group(s)
- an analysis of the ability of the market to supply that housing
- a statement about the gap between the projected housing needs of the client group(s) and the projected supply
- a list of the assumptions that have been made in the analysis.

Predicting future housing demand is complex and requires special expertise.

Most municipalities have access to population projections but these alone are insufficient to do a future housing needs assessment. For this purpose, an understanding of what is happening within the households is needed, including an assessment of the future housing plans, and needs and preferences of the individuals in the target group(s). This assessment is usually based on trend data describing household characteristics such as household size, age and income breakdown.

CMHC's Potential Housing Demand Model was developed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to assist municipalities in projecting housing needs. It can be used to produce 25-year population projections and can convert them into household projections. Although the model is no longer for sale, municipalities can still order custom data runs from local CMHC market analysts. The data can be broken down by household and non-household formation and by type and tenure in terms of housing demand. The data can produce family data broken down by family type, and household information by household maintainer. However, to get an accurate reading of future housing needs in a particular community, this data has to be analyzed in combination with other factors, such as the nature of local economies and job growth, as well as local migration trends.

Housing supply is estimated from the current dwelling stock and projections of future construction and demolition trends. Estimating future construction trends involves a complex analysis of a variety of data including population and employment forecasts, land availability, land and construction costs, economic growth, migration trends, consumer preferences, etc.

The vacancy rate also impacts construction trends, for example, if there is an oversupply of certain housing types it will reduce construction requirements in the respective areas until the inventory has been absorbed by the market.

Finally, the assessment should include a list of the assumptions that have been made in the preparation of the demand and supply figures. Justification for the assumptions need to be provided and relevant documents cited.

Identify Key Issues

Identification of key issues is necessary given that many municipalities will lack the resources to fully address every housing shortfall. By providing information on the number of people in need in each need group, the depth of the need and the size of shortfall in the market ability to meet the need, the needs assessment supplies a quantitative basis for refining or modifying the preliminary statement of key issues found in the Strategy Terms of Reference. The recommended set of key issues should be submitted for approval to Council after being subject to a wider public as part of the consultation process (see Chapter 4 - Public Participation).

Potential Problems and Solutions

Estimating the number of vacant units available in the housing stock.
The CMHC Rental Market Survey provides some information on vacant units, but the survey does not cover the entire rental stock and it provides no estimate of the vacant stock in the ownership segment of the market, nor in rental condominiums or secondary/accessory suites. This means it is not always possible to provide a rigorous analysis of the housing shortfall for specific segments of the population. The only way to deal with this problem is to undertake a local survey, which can be costly.

Spatial mismatches
A common problem is that the boundaries of housing needs study areas may be inconsistent with census areas. To address this problem, special tabulations may be required at a cost.

Anomalies in the data
Graphing data series will show how stable the data is. Large spikes or troughs that are not part of the normal pattern of the data are probably anomalies. To address this, call the person or department responsible for the series and they will probably have an explanation.

Addressing data problems

City of Nanaimo

The City of Nanaimo completed its Housing Needs Assessment in 1999. While useful, Census Canada and BC STATS data did not provide information at the level of detail required to fully assess housing needs for the target need groups (homeless and special needs groups, including youth). This required supplementary data and qualitative information that was gathered through informal channels. To achieve this, extensive interviews were held with a wide range of housing providers and service agency representatives working in Nanaimo.

Source: Strategic Planning Department, City of Nanaimo. Contact: Social Planner, City of Nanaimo, tel.: (250) 755-4483.

Getting data on certain groups can be difficult.
It is difficult to access reliable data on hard-to-house youth, the homeless and aboriginal populations (see box). Municipalities should

turn to advocacy groups for data in these areas. While these groups may not keep systematic records and counts of client need, they are a vital source in identifying the need.

Longitudinal databases are costly to maintain.
The establishment and maintenance of a longitudinal housing needs database is very costly for municipalities. Thus, municipalities must rely on CMHC and Statistics Canada in continuing to maintain their roles in providing data.

Checklist for Success

Commission a qualified consultant to undertake the work.
With the exception of large municipalities with research database management capability, it is highly unlikely that a municipality will have the staff resources to undertake a housing needs assessment.

Use Access to Information Acts if necessary.
In identifying and accessing data, if required, it may be useful to resort to using provincial and territorial, and federal Access to Information Acts.

Establishing a database infrastructure
A key consideration is that it takes time to build the infrastructure for data analysis and indicator reporting. This requires the allocation of resources for future benefits and requires officials with considerable vision. To facilitate this long-term capacity building process, the municipality needs to adopt consistent set of data collecting and sharing practices throughout its departments.

Establish collaborative partnerships with community groups.
Developing and supporting community-based partnerships can get access to community data sources and generate opportunities for funding from government agencies that support partnerships.

Take the first step of consolidating a housing database.
The initial set of data may not be perfect. The establishment of an effective database is an incremental process.

Resources

- Urban Aspects Consulting Group Ltd. *Developing Housing Policy in Small Communities and Municipalities: Handbook and Workshop Series,* 1998. Sponsored by the Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC) and the B.C. Real Estate Foundation.
  Available from CRHC,
  tel.: (250) 388-6474.

- CMHC. *"How to Begin a Needs Assessment for your Community"* in *Planning Housing and Support Services for Seniors,* CMHC, 1998. This guide is designed to help seniors community groups assess their housing needs. There is also a computerized version of this Guide under the title SENIORS.
  Available from CMHC,
  tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

- Nelson, Kathryn P. Housing Assistance Needs and the Housing Stock: Data for Comprehensive housing Affordability Strategies, *Journal of the American Planning Association,* Winter, 1992.

- Knoll, Paul F., William O'Dell, Marc T. Smith, and James Sullivan, Florida's Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Methodology, *Journal of the American Planning Association,* Autumn, 1997.

- Betty Jo White et al. *Developing Community Housing Needs Assessments and Strategies: A Self-help Guidebook for Non metropolitan Communities.* American Association of Housing Educators, 1992.
  Despite being geared towards rural communities, this resource presents a logical step-by-step method to perform a housing needs assessment.
  Available at Web site
  www.extension.iastate.edu/housing/media/pdf/aahe-guidebook.pdf/

- Jerry Knox. *Housing Needs Assessment,* 1996. A step-by-step methodology to guide the creation of a community housing needs assessment. It is applicable to both the U.S. and Canada. Available from the Department of Community and Regional Planning of Iowa State University, tel.: (515) 294-8959; e-mail: **jeryknox@iastate.edu**

- Lapointe Consulting Ltd. *Housing needs and options of older adults in Peel Region,* 2000. An assessment of needs for housing done by the Peel region in Ontario. Includes a good bibliography on housing the elderly.
  Available at Web site
  www.region.peel.on.ca/housing/older.htm;
  e-mail: **info@region.peel.on.ca**

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities. *Developing a Municipal Quality of Housing Measure,* April 1998. Developed by Saskatoon, Vancouver and Toronto as part of the FCM Quality of Life Study. The measures include percentage of households paying 30% or more of their incomes on rent (an affordability housing need indicator), the proportion of renters able to purchase starter homes in the market (an affordability indicator), proportion of existing stock that is substandard (an adequacy indicator).
  Available at Web site **www.fcm.ca/**

Chapter 4: Public Participation

Introduction

One of the strengths of an affordable housing strategy is that it provides a vehicle for collaboration among the broad range of community agencies and individuals with a stake in improving access to affordable housing. If the strategy that emerges from the strategy development process is to be "owned" by this informal network of stakeholders, it needs to reflect their interests, concerns and aspirations. For this reason, developing an affordable housing strategy requires a well thought-out public participation plan.

Types of Public Participation

From a planning point of view, there are two distinct kinds of public participation:

- consultation events
- communication vehicles

Consultation events bring the general public and key stakeholders (such as representatives of planning agencies, housing providers and community groups) together to discuss housing issues and needs, the goals of the strategy, as well as strategic recommendations and implementation tools. The purpose of consultation is to get the best possible input from organized interests and the general public with regards to the key choices that have to be made when developing an affordable housing strategy (see box).

Communication vehicles inform people about the strategy and the facts on which it is based, the strategic options available, and their pros and cons. The purpose of communication vehicles is to build awareness of the strategy and to provide information to stakeholders and the interested public so that they are able to make informed comments and decisions. Communication vehicles can be "in-house" productions, such as newsletters or a Web site, or it can be through the mass media or advertising (see box).

Consultation

Boulder Comprehensive Housing Strategy

Boulder City Council identified a number of housing needs that would serve as the focus for the City's housing strategy: housing for workers, moderate-income households, low and very low-income households, and university students. These goals then became the subject of public consultations during which the following questions were considered:

- What are the housing challenges facing each of the various populations targeted for analysis?
- To what extent are Boulder's current housing programs meeting their goals and to what extent are those goals adequate?
- To what extent do other existing Boulder's regulations and programs present a barrier to the development of affordable housing?
- What options are feasible to address Boulder's housing challenges?
- How do we decide whether housing programs are successful?
- How fast should we implement a comprehensive strategy and what should we do first?

Source: City of Boulder. *Comprehensive Housing Strategy*, 1999. Available from: Department of Housing and Human Services, City of Boulder, tel.: (303) 441-4195;

Communication

Calgary's Community Action Plan: Reducing Homelessness in Calgary

As part of its Community Action Plan, Calgary introduced a communications campaign to make the residents aware of the implications the strategy has for them, to bring the issue to their "doorstep" and get them involved. The campaign focused on creating community awareness that homelessness could afflict almost anyone. As part of the campaign, ordinary people who had become homeless were profiled and the point was made that many people are only a pay cheque away from homelessness.

Besides raising awareness of homelessness issues in the community, the campaign has helped to get financial support for housing the homeless from local businesses and to get agencies within the community on side. The campaign involved the creative use of posters and other communication tools such as the *Community Action Plan Bulletin* (a joint publication of the City of Calgary and the Calgary Homeless Foundation). There was extensive media coverage because of the strong corporate commitment to the strategy.

Source: Calgary Homeless Foundation. *Housing our Homeless: A Stakeholder Consultation. Accessing shelter needs in Calgary,* March 2000. Available from: Community Strategies, City of Calgary, tel.: (403) 268-5155.

Steps to Create a Public Participation Plan

A public participation plan could be formulated under the direction of the Strategy Development Task Force or a sub-committee established for this purpose, but the actual work may be carried out by a consultant. Public participation plans usually feature the following steps:

- identify the relevant stakeholders
- create a public participation schedule
- choose consultation and communication methods
- prepare supporting material.

Identify the Relevant Stakeholders

The development of an affordable housing strategy requires the intensive participation of a large number of organizations and individuals. Participants may be drawn from the general public or from the following sectors and organizations:

- community associations, such as tenants associations, homeowners associations and neighbourhood groups
- local housing providers such as non-profit housing societies, as well as those providing supportive services
- members of social sectors or groups that may be potential beneficiaries of an affordable housing strategy, including people with disabilities, seniors, single-parents, students, aboriginals, and so on
- community-based organizations and service clubs representing women, seniors, youth, ethno-cultural groups, etc.
- municipal departments, such as community services, planning and development
- senior government agencies related to social services and housing delivery
- service providers, such as community health centres, youth services bureau, community- or religion-based immigration services, and regional social service agencies

- elected officials
- housing experts, such as local housing policy and health/social policy consultants or academics working in social policy
- business organizations such as financial institutions, builders/developers, realtors, and the corporate community
- student housing agencies at local colleges and universities.

The various stakeholders may be involved in the public participation process at different levels of intensity and through different channels. Some participants will want to be intensively involved in the formulation of the strategy while others will merely want to be kept "in the loop" as the strategy develops. Some may participate enthusiastically as a result of an impersonal invitation to an event; others may need to be approached personally. Some examples of how different target groups can be involved using different methods include:

- the general public may be targeted through the mass media and advertisement
- a "mailing list" of members of the public that have shown up at consultation events may receive a newsletter or e-mail notification of future events
- representatives of major stakeholder groups, city councillors, and others deeply involved in the process may receive personal invitations to consultation events
- key informants in the housing industry or community groups may be interviewed to get their opinion of the major affordability issues and potential solutions
- those with experience with affordability problems, inadequate shelter or homelessness may be surveyed for their input on how existing housing policies function.

Create a Public Participation Schedule

The need for consultation with stakeholders and the general public will arise at various stages in the development of the affordable housing strategy. Typically, consultation comes in at the following points in the development of the strategy:

- review and refinement of goals and basic principles adopted by Strategy Development Task Force in preparation stage (see box)
- review and refinement of the key issues as adopted by the Strategy Development Task Force and fleshed out through the needs assessment (see box)
- discussion of the direction, tools and options to address needs
- formulation of action plans to implement the options
- feedback on a draft strategy.

Communication is an ongoing activity accompanying the unfolding of the strategy through every phase of the process. Communication is typically used at the following points:

- announcing the start-up of an affordable housing strategy, its purpose and expected outcome
- creating an awareness of the need for an affordable housing strategy
- inviting participation at community information events, such as open houses

- announcing the availability of draft documents, such as policy proposals, draft action plans, the draft affordable housing strategy report, report cards and annual reports
- inviting the development community to participate in the implementation of the strategy, such as requests for proposals.

Public consultation – goals and basic principles

Creating Community Solutions: An Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Ottawa-Carleton

The consultation component of the strategy development process included a Community Forum attended by more than 100 participants and key informant interviews with 40 individuals. During this process, the following basic principles for the development and implementation of the plan were identified:

- Prevention-focused: to achieve a balance between intervention and prevention services
- Collaboration and communication: to seek collaboration among levels of government and between service providers and the homeless
- Focused on long-term solutions: to develop an integrated strategy based on long-term solutions to preventing homelessness
- Community involvement: to involve a broad representation of public and private sector stakeholders and those with experience of homelessness
- Research-based: to investigate and adopt tools that have proven effectiveness and to establish a system of benchmarks and monitoring to ensure efficiency and accountability.

Source: Ottawa-Carleton. *Creating Community Solutions: An Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Ottawa-Carleton,* 1999.
Available from: Client Service Centre, City of Ottawa, tel.: (613) 580-2424.

Public consultation—key issues

Québec City

Québec City's housing strategy includes three priority areas of intervention: housing development and aid to homeowners, the renovation and maintenance of the existing building stock, and social housing. The priority areas were determined through public consultation at the city and neighbourhood level and information sessions. For each of these three priority areas, objectives for improvement were laid out in the strategy.

Source: Ville de Québec. Division de l'aménagement du territoire, Centre de développement économique et urbain. Politique d'habitation. Novembre, 2000.
Available at Web site **www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/fr/commhtml/622.html**

Public participation schedule

Québec City's Housing Strategy

A public participation process, managed by the City's Public Relations Office, was undertaken from February to May 2000.

Consultation:

Phase 1: Information sessions

- Information evening for the general population, with a question period (March 1).
- Information and workshop sessions organized by the 10 neighbourhood councils–presentations by City staff.

Phase 2: Workshops

- One day (May 6) of public workshops to allow stakeholders to examine and debate the different elements and themes to be included in the housing strategy.

Phase 3: Public Submissions and Panel Hearings

- The Public Relations Office received 27 written submissions, 19 of which were made at the public hearing. Together, the submissions made some 200 formal recommendations and many more informal suggestions.
- One-day (May 27) series of panel hearings where the public submissions were summarized and debated among the panelists, City staff and stakeholders. The public was invited to pose questions to the four to five panelists at each session.

Communication:

- The City held a press conference on February 22, 2000 during which the main themes of the strategy and the consultation process were presented.
- For each step in the consultation process, the public relations office issued press releases and announced the dates of public meetings in newspapers and on the City's Web site. In addition, a newspaper article describing the basic principles of the strategy and the methods of public participation was published on March 19, 2000.

Background documents:

- Fifteen days before the launching of the first phase of the consultation process (February 15), 900 copies of a summary document explaining the proposed strategy was sent out to those who had asked to be kept informed of the process and to organizations involved in housing policy and provision. This document included a schedule for the public consultation process.
- The City also distributed a statistical summary of the city's people and housing on its Web site.

A total of 22 organizations and 350 individuals participated in the process. A consultation report of 312 pages was published in November 2000 that synthesized the main ideas and recommendations put forward during the consultation process, organized into themes and sub-themes.

Source: Ville de Québec. *Politique d'habitation - Rapport de consultation, Bureau des relations avec la population*, Novembre 2000. Available from: Conseiller au développement, Division de l'aménagement du territoire, Ville de Québec, tel.: (418) 691-6203.

Choose Consultation Methods

The following techniques are among the range of consultation methods available.

Focus groups
Focus groups are excellent ways to consult with groups of professionals (for example, builders and development consultants), industry leaders (for example, growing sectors of the economy), existing residents and potential target groups (for example, homeless people). They are usually used to get feedback on a specific issue and to gauge the likely response of a broader group. Focus groups are especially useful in assessing the acceptability of specific affordability tools. Groups are usually composed of about 10 to 12 participants and are led by an experienced facilitator who guides the group through a series of questions.

Community forums
A community forum can facilitate public discussion on broad affordability questions (such as, what are the issues, who are those in need) or more specific implementation type issues (such as, what tools to use, where and when). It is usually an open event to which all members of the community are invited. A panel of speakers often presents prepared material on relevant issues and then the floor is opened up for comments and questions from the audience. The goal is not to achieve consensus but to air opinions and to get a "feel" for community concerns. Forums are usually one-day events and are held at some community facility such as the town hall, a university lecture hall, or a recreation centre.

Community forums

London's Public Forum on Affordable Housing

London's Affordable Housing Task Force, in conjunction with the London Social Planning Council and LifeSpin, held a public forum on affordable housing. The intent of the forum was to inform the public, including those active in the housing sector, on what initiatives other municipalities have undertaken to address the issue of affordable housing. The format of the Public Forum included three workshop sessions and a discussion session at the end to summarize the results of the workshops. Workshops included: Municipal Revolving Capital Loan Fund and other Financial Options for Affordable Housing Projects; Municipal Incentives for Affordable Housing Development; and Private and Non-Profit Options for Creating Affordable Housing Projects. The recommendations developed at the forum were integrated in the Affordable Housing Task Force Report.

Source: Department of Planning and Development, City of London. *Affordable Housing Task Force Report,* 2000. Available from: Housing Planner, City of London, tel.: (519) 661-5067; Web site **www.city.london.on.ca/planning/housing/housingpage.htm**

The Seattle Housing Summit

The Seattle Housing Summit, held in the spring of 1998, was called to provide a focus to discuss the City's continuing affordable housing crisis. The Summit brought together developers, homeless advocates, bankers, neighbourhood activists, homeowners and renters. The Housing Summit provided the anchor for Seattle's housing strategy and program.

Sources: Office of Housing, City of Seattle. *Mayor's Action Agenda,* 1999. *Mayor's Action Agenda Progress Report,* 2000. Available from: Web site **www.cityofseattle.net/housing/default.htm**

Workshops
A workshop is a structured forum where people are invited to work together in a group on a common problem. The goals of the workshop are to hear in detail the different views and suggestions of participants, to discuss the issues in a non-confrontational atmosphere and, often, to build consensus for action. Participants are selected for their knowledge and expertise or for their ability to represent a relevant community perspective. Workshops can be time-consuming and expensive to organize, but may lead to valuable outcomes if properly managed. Workshops are effective for setting goals, identifying and evaluating options and making an action plan.

Workshops

Winnipeg's Housing Policy Initiative

As part of its housing policy process, the City of Winnipeg organized a Mayor's Workshop on Housing. This was held in July 1999 following some initial research and prior to policy refinement and adoption. The workshop focused on three tasks:

- Question 1: Neighbourhood Governance. How can neighbourhoods have more control over their development, particularly in the area of housing?
- Question 2: Preservation and Improvement of Neighbourhoods. What are the tools/ processes required to assist neighbourhoods to achieve their goals?
- Question 3: Creating Housing Choice. What kind of incentives or actions do you think are required to provide for a wider range of housing choices within neighbourhoods?

A workshop kit outlining the tasks and providing background material was distributed ahead to participants.

Source: City of Winnipeg. Mayor's Workshop on Housing, Participants Package - *Draft Housing Implementation Framework*, March 2000. Available from: Policy Analyst, Mayor's Office, City of Winnipeg, tel.: (204) 986-7196; e-mail **dschoor@city.winnipeg.md.ca**

Surveys and interviews
Surveys are a very effective means of assessing public priorities and attitudes because they provide quantitative information on a specific set of questions. The results can be fed into the strategy development process at any number of points, from prioritizing affordability issues or gathering comments on draft action proposals. To reduce costs, surveys can be distributed in one of the communication vehicles described below or in a separate mail-out.

There may be people who have direct experience with affordability problems, but who are not comfortable speaking in a larger forum/workshop setting. Community groups can help to identify such people. To get their input, one-on-one consultation may be necessary, for example, through interviews. Interviews can also be helpful in getting the opinion of key informants within the housing industry, academia, or community groups.

Choose Communication Methods

The following techniques are among the range of communication methods available.

Direct mail/fax-outs/e-mail
Although relatively expensive, direct mail and personal letters/invitations could be used at strategic points of the process when full participation at consultation or communication events is essential. Fax-outs can be a less expensive alternative to direct mail. E-mail

is also becoming a popular method as it provides easy communication of material in a variety of graphic presentations.

Open houses or displays
An open house is an informal event to encourage people to drop in, obtain information and ask questions at their own leisure. It is an opportunity for members of the Strategy Development Task Force and other housing experts and stakeholders to meet the public and exchange ideas in an informal atmosphere. An open house may have exhibits and displays, materials (such as brochures) to hand out, and staff people to speak with visitors and answer questions. It provides a good opportunity to present visual information, such as a video explaining the main issues, graphs showing housing trends, photos of innovative or successful projects, or maps showing areas in particular need of affordable housing. Open houses are most useful near the start-up of a strategy development process because they offer a general orientation to the process and issues. They are also useful as a means of collecting public comments once the draft strategy has been prepared.

Advertisement/promotion in newspapers and other media
The strategy consultation process and agenda may be announced in the local newspapers, or on radio and television stations. While paid advertisements are relatively expensive, the use of public service announcements and community bulletin boards are usually free.

In addition to press releases and announcements, a series of newspaper articles or TV talk shows/ panel discussions can be initiated on local housing issues and potential solutions. It is a good idea to designate a media contact and to have a media briefing kit available.

Information bulletins or newsletters
Information bulletins or newsletters are vehicles to sustain public interest in the strategy or proposed actions as well as effective way to explain the strategy process as it unfolds. They are produced at strategic points during the development of the strategy and distributed to the general public at municipal offices, public libraries, recreational facilities and so on. Bulletins or newsletters may include information on:

- progress reports
- housing and income statistics
- tools to promote housing affordability
- housing innovation in the community
- consultation process and notification of upcoming events
- summary of community input.

Newsletters, in addition to communicating, can also provide a means of dialogue. For instance a tear-off sheet on the last page of a newsletter is a convenient way for readers to register their comments with the municipality.

Web sites
A page on to the municipality's Web site dedicated to the affordable housing strategy could provide a cost-effective means to keep interested members of the community informed. An e-mail "talk back" option on the Web site offers a simple but effective means which members of the community can use to easily communicate their ideas and recommendations. Affordable housing strategy information is available now at several municipal Web sites, including Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary.

Prepare/Disseminate Supporting Material

The success of consultation events and communication campaigns will depend in part on the availability of sufficient supporting materials that can be used to better inform participants or to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their participation. The range of supporting materials include background information, workbooks and toolkits.

Background Information

Toronto

- *The Mayor's Action Task Force Report for the City of Toronto*, 1999 (known as the Golden Report).

Calgary

- *Calgary Homeless Study*, 1997.
- *2000 Count of Homeless Persons, Calgary*, 2000.

Ottawa-Carleton

- *Environmental Scan –Ottawa-Carleton*, 1999.
- *Homelessness in Ottawa-Carleton*, 1999.
- *1999 Housing Review, Ottawa-Carleton.*
- *An Inventory of Services Available to Persons Who are Homeless, Ottawa-Carleton*, 1999.

Boulder

- *Housing Needs Assessment*, 1999, Boulder, Colorado.
- *Understanding Boulder's Housing.*

Background Information
This might include housing statistics, a housing needs analysis, a list of housing resources and programs, available tools to promote affordable housing, or a list of local service providers.

The Strategy Development Task Force, the Strategy Co-ordinator, municipal staff, or a consultant hired by the municipality for this purpose may prepare the background documents. The box provides some examples of the background materials prepared for a variety of strategies in various Canadian cities and in Boulder, Colorado.

Workbooks and Tool Kits
Workbooks and tool kits are helpful in making the consultation process more effective. Workbooks provide basic housing information and a structured list of questions that can focus the work of the event participants. A tool kit describes the range of mechanisms that are available to address specific problems. Tool kits are sometimes used in conjunction with workbooks at consultation events, such as workshops.

Tool Kits

The City of Boulder Tool Kit of Housing Options

The City of Boulder Tool Kit of Housing Options listed sixty possible tools the city could consider in assisting in the development of affordable housing. Examples of tools: annex new affordable housing sites, expand the number and types of accessory units, co-ordinate with other city and county efforts, and partner with employers about housing benefits and programs. The tool kit was produced by the city of Boulder and made available to any interested resident.

Source: City of Boulder. *Comprehensive Housing Strategy*, 1999. Available from: City of Boulder, Department of Housing and Human Services, City of Boulder, tel.: (303) 441-4195; e-mail: **housingstrat@ci.boulder.co.us**

Potential Problems and Solutions

Lack of interest
Often, those not in need do not understand the issues. Make sure that the community at large understands the issues and that all segments of society are involved. Other members of the community may feel that the participation process will "make no difference" to the strategy outcome. A clear statement on the part of Council to take the outcome of public participation exercises into account in key decisions can enhance community involvement in the strategy development process.

Fear of controversy
Often consultations falter because of the fear of rocking the boat. The committees and meetings are attended by those who are already converted to the cause and important objections or competing options are not heard. A special effort is needed to reach out to those who can bring competing perspectives to bear on the process.

Resource constraints
Some of the participation methods outlined above can be expensive to conduct, especially if trained professionals are called in for specific tasks. But for all the tasks involved in developing an affordable housing strategy, it is perhaps easiest to attract volunteers from the community. For most municipalities, there will be no need to hire a professional media/public relations expert as videos, newsletters and brochures can often be produced with donated expertise. For labour intensive activities such as door-to-door delivery of pamphlets, untrained volunteers can be used.

Checklist for Success

Test materials before use
Before putting materials such as workbooks or surveys to use, test them on insiders to ensure their effectiveness.

Make materials accessible to all
Public participation materials should be made available in alternate formats that is, large print, braille, cassette tape, disc, etc. whenever possible.

Use visualization
The words "affordable housing" can give rise to negative images of poorly designed, high-density buildings. Show some pictures of great urban design to change people's perception. Use computer-aided models and let people rate various housing designs as input for planners and developers to use on future projects.

Provide graphic description of affordability issues
In addition to the standard definition of affordability as expressed in rates and percentages, ensure that descriptive examples are provided that illustrate the depth and magnitude of the problem. Using first hand "stories" (for example, personal experience of inadequate housing) can be very effective in bringing home local realities. Local social and non-profit agencies may be very good at getting this kind of information.

Balance attention between problems and solutions
While affordability problems have to serve as the primary focus of attention early in the strategy development process, the consultation and communications process should gradually shift to a greater emphasis on solutions.

Inspire through examples
Show what other municipalities have achieved with similar resources.

Emphasize the strategy as a "homegrown" solution
Ensure that the public understands that the strategy is a product of the community, a reflection of its resources and strengths and its vision for a better future.

Resources

- Center for Community Change. *How to Frame Good Stories About Your Work: A Guide to Developing Messages and Good Stories About Your Work,* 1999. Available from the Center for Community Change, tel.: (202) 342-0567.

- Louise Quesnel. Public Consultation: *A Tool for Local Democracy,* 2000. Published by ICURR. This study discusses the basic concepts of democracy, representation and the consultation process and analyzes the various formulas for public consultation. Can be ordered from ICURR (for member municipalities only) at **www.icurr.ca/english/** or tel.: (416) 973-1326.

- Cityspaces Consulting Ltd. Toward more inclusive neighbourhoods: tool kit, 1996. Prepared for the NIMBY Task Group, B.C. Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security. Discusses the NIMBY or not-in-my-backyard syndrome and neighbourhood opposition to non-profit housing; intended for housing sponsors, developers, and local governments. Booklets include:
  1) *Property Values Unaffected by Non-Market Housing;*
  2) *Check Out These Resources!,* an annotated bibliography including videos;
  3) Building Partnerships with Local Government;
  4) Design Details Count!;
  5) Sample Materials for Sponsors, including frequently asked questions, and checklists for media release and advisory, and open houses;
  6) Gaining and Keeping Community Acceptance, including communication, dispute resolution, media relations, etc.

  Available at Web site **www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/housing/NEIGHBOUR%5Cindex.htm**

- Joanne Young-Evans. *Developing a communications strategy for your municipality.* How-to series manual # 37, 1992. Prepared for the City of Waterloo. This manual outlines the importance of an effective communications strategy for both internal and external groups as well as the process, elements, and costs. Appendices include examples of employee communication programs and a rating system for a municipality's public relations image. Can be ordered from ICURR (for member municipalities only) at **www.icurr.ca/english/** or tel.: (416) 973-1326.

- Department of Housing, Peel County. *Community Support for Affordable Housing: A Public Consultation Package,* 1994. Geared to helping planners harness public opinion and articulate affordable housing programmes.
  Available at Web site **www.actprogram.com/english/casestudies/pdf/PB140.pdf**

- National Civic League. *The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook,* 1996. A handbook that explains the community visioning process. It looks at both the theory and how to do it.
  Available from the National Civic League, tel.: 1 800 223-6004.

Chapter 5: Action Plans

Introduction

The key housing affordability issues facing the community were established based on the needs assessment and consultation with the public and interested stakeholders. These key issues form the framework around which strategies can be developed. Each key issue should be the subject of an action plan, which may in turn be composed of a number of individual tools. The action plans need to be brought together into an integrated draft strategy, which can then serve as the basis for further public consultation before being finalized as the official affordable housing strategy for the municipality.

The Range of Tools

There is a wide range of tools that municipalities may use in addressing key affordable housing issues. These tools make up the basic building blocks of an affordable housing strategy, whether it be of the comprehensive or focussed type.

One of the most comprehensive sources of information on the available tools, the Affordable Housing Ideas (AHI), is being developed by CMHC.

The AHI is a web-based document that provides a detailed analysis of each of a range of ideas grouped into categories. For each idea, it will provide a description of how the idea works, its advantages, issues or problems arising with its use, an assessment of the tool's effectiveness in improving affordability, along with sources of further information.

Steps to Formulate and Integrate Action Plans

The steps involved in formulating action plans are:

- create a framework
- assess what has already been done to address each key issue
- identify options and choose tools for addressing each key issue
- set specific targets and responsibilities for each tool
- integrate action plans into a draft affordable housing strategy
- consult the public and finalize the affordable housing strategy.

CMHC's Affordable Housing Advisor

A sampling of ideas that are likely to appear in the web-based tool

Policy and regulation

- Reducing Length of Approvals
- Modifying Development Standards
- Retaining Affordable Housing
- Secondary Suites
- Providing for Garden Suites

Community and housing design

- Increasing Density through Lot Size and Design
- Increasing Density Through Building Form
- Incremental Housing
- Creating Flexible Housing
- Alternative Development Standards

Construction and technology

- Using Prefabrication in Housing
- Using Volunteer Labour
- Using Materials Cost-Effectively
- Building Energy Efficient Housing

Operations and management

- Reducing Maintenance Costs
- Reducing Energy Costs
- Using Life Cycle Costing
- Using Volunteer Resources

Financing and tenure

- Using Housing Trust Funds
- Developing Community Land Trusts
- Using the Land Lease Tenure
- Providing Land at Reduced Cost
- Using Sweat Equity
- Applying the Life Lease Model
- Using Equity Co-operatives
- Partnerships

Redevelopment and renovation

- Acquiring and Renovating Housing
- Converting Non-residential Buildings
- Increasing Density on Under-Utilized Sites
- Redeveloping Sites

Create an Action Planning Framework

A series of working groups should be set up, each responsible for developing an action plan around one key issue. The working groups may be sub-committees of the Strategy Development Task Force, but additional community partners may be recruited where appropriate.

Assess What Has Already Been Done

In many municipalities, some tools will already be in place prior to the development of the affordable housing strategy. An inventory of such tools, found for instance in the official plan or zoning regulations, should be taken.

The identified tools should be grouped according to the key issues and gaps identified. Include not only those tools adopted by the municipality but also those initiated by community partners (such as, non-profits, service providers, religious groups).

Identify Options and Choose Tools

With an assessment of what has already been done on different key issues, the subcommittees can begin work on the details of the action plans that will eventually be integrated to make up the affordable housing strategy.

As a first step in developing an action plan, the tools that could potentially address the key issue under consideration need to be identified. The CMHC Affordable Housing Advisor described above is intended to be the source of such information in Canada, although other sources are also available. Other municipalities attempting to address a similar issue and operating under similar (legislation, economic, etc.) conditions could be canvassed for their experience. The research reports mentioned in Chapter 2 - Preparation of this Guidebook can also serve this purpose.

Options are tabled because they have the potential to meet the housing affordability goals of the community, but a range of other factors need to be taken into account when choosing among tools for each action plan. The tools chosen should be:

- compatible with other policy concerns of the municipality (for example, growth management, economic development, social policy, capital planning)
- acceptable to specific stakeholders and the wider community
- suitable to local economic, political and social conditions
- implementable using the resources currently existing or expected to be available to the municipality and its partners
- permitted by provincial or territorial legislation (see box).

Each sub-committee should provide a preliminary analysis of the most promising tools for the key issue around which their action plan is built. The following process is recommended for the analysis/evaluation of tools:

- describe the tool in terms of which key issue it would help to address and how it would be implemented
- list the potential resources available to implement the tool

Action plan framework

Boulder Comprehensive Housing Strategy

Boulder organized its action plans around the following key issues:

- Managing density and growth
- Strengthening partnerships
- Holding and gaining ground on support for very low and low income households
- Keeping the moderate income worker in Boulder
- Helping special population and seniors

Source: City of Boulder. *Comprehensive Housing Strategy*, 1999. Available from: Department of Housing and Human Services, City of Boulder, tel.: (303) 441-4195; e-mail: **housingstrat@ci.boulder.co.us**

- gather information on previous experience with the tool in the municipality or other jurisdictions (for example, how many units were created with the help of this tool? Who benefits directly or indirectly?)
- estimate how many units could be produced, preserved or rehabilitated with the help of this tool
- estimate costs of implementing the tool to the municipality and its partners
- identify other tools that could be used in combination with this one
- specify in what neighbourhoods/settings this tool could be effective
- list the ancillary benefits of this tool (for example, reduction of crime, improvements in public health, check on urban sprawl)
- list potential complications or issues in implementing the tool.

The above process would help eliminate the tools that are too difficult to implement or less likely to be successful in the local context and channel attention to the most effective options. The remaining tools could be prioritized in terms of the promise they offer to address a key housing issue or functional area.

Set Specific Objectives, Targets and Responsibilities

For each tool, the sub-committee should explain the objective of the tool (relating it to the overall goals of the strategy) and translate this objective into a quantifiable target to be achieved (see Chapter 8 – Evaluation and Monitoring). Targets can be short-, medium-or long-term.

The sub-committee should also identify the lead agency that will have primary responsibility for designing and implementing the tool, the community partners to be involved, and resources required. Resources should be specified in terms of dollars, staff time commitments, and other contributions required from the municipality and local community partners to implement recommended tools.

Holding a workshop for sub-committee members is a good way to make these types of determinations. Within this context, a good technique for drafting an action plan is through the use of an Action Planning Table (see box).

Provincial legislation

The B.C. Local Government Act

In some provinces, legislation has been adopted to help facilitate municipal action on affordable housing. This is especially true in B.C., where the province adopted the Local Government Act (formerly known as the Municipal Act) in 2000. The intent of the new Act is to empower local governments so they can adapt to new issues and challenges in planning for better communities. This includes some service delivery choices (including for example, assisting a non-profit housing society by guaranteeing repayment of borrowing or providing land at below-market value). The Act's broad corporate powers can be used to facilitate new partnerships to provide services and facilities.

Contact: Corporate Policy Branch, B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs,
tel.: (250) 387-4084;
e-mail **www.marh.gov.bc.ca**

Integrate Action Plans into a Draft Affordable Housing Strategy

At this point the various action plans have to be pulled together into a coherent draft affordable housing strategy. The action plans should be reviewed as a whole by the Strategy Development Task Force to ensure that:

- no conflicting approaches are being recommended
- linkages are made among key issues or functional areas, depending on how the action plans were organized, and that they are combined into a coherent strategy
- existing tools are properly recognized and integrated into the strategy
- proposed action plans do not assume an unreasonable level of resource availability given community and local government constraints.

Any inconsistencies or unrealistic assumptions should be referred back to the relevant sub-committees for review and the draft strategy should be accordingly modified.

The draft strategy should then be circulated to the affected departments within the municipality for their comments. Once the comments are processed and the necessary changes are made to the draft strategy, a report should be sent to Council outlining the process to date and providing the text of the draft strategy.

Consult the Public and Finalize the Affordable Housing Strategy

Once the draft affordable housing strategy has been developed, the municipality should hold a well-advertised community forum (see Chapter 4 - Public Participation). Stakeholders and the general public should be invited and a panel

Targets

City of Toronto

Examples of targets used by the City of Toronto:

- Add 675 new beds to the city's hostel system by the end of 2001.
- SCPI (Supportive Community Partnership Initiative) will help build a projected 400-500 transitional housing units over the course of the Community Plan (three years).
- 40% of the $53 million federal money (SCPI) over three years will be targeted for capital projects.
- The Let's Build program will assist in the development of up to 500 units annually by 2003.

Source: City of Toronto. *Report Card on Homelessness,* 2001.
Available from: Web site **www.city.toronto.on.ca/homelessness/index.htm**

Develop action plans

Sample of an Action Planning Table

The headings or major points of the Action Plan are written on flip chart paper or on a board. The facilitator or one of the workshop participants systematically walks the participants through the points and questions.

Tool	Target	Lead Agency	Partners	Resources
1				
2				

can be asked to speak on the experience of other cities using any tools that are new to the municipality. Local councillors and the community as a whole should be invited to provide comments on the proposed strategy. The event also provides an opportunity for the municipality and its community partners to make statements committing themselves to furnishing the resources needed to make the strategy work.

An opportunity for community input should be provided. Some participants may wish to submit written briefs. Comments received during the community forum should be incorporated into the final affordable housing strategy. If a consultation report is published presenting the events of the forum, it should distinguish between those suggestions that were accepted in the final strategy and those that were rejected. The latter should be accompanied by an explanation or reason for the rejection. The final strategy, along with a report with recommendations to adopt and fund the strategy needs to be prepared for Council.

Potential Problems and Solutions

Process is complicated
In the formulation of action plans and an integrated strategy, various processes are certainly plausible, but they will all involve a series of iterations that will require ongoing feedback and adjustment. This can be frustrating at times as participants in the process see ideas come and go or the same ground gone over more than once. Streamlining the process as much as possible and preparing municipal staff and community partners in advance can minimize these frustrations. Use professional consultants where appropriate to facilitate meetings.

Variable market conditions
Market conditions will affect the degree to which some tools are successful. For example, density bonusing and development charges will not work in slow markets and in fact the latter may severely impede housing construction, especially affordable housing. A thorough analysis of each tool in the context of local conditions is recommended.

Checklist for Success:

A successful package of tools
The package of tools chosen should be cost effective, feasible under local economic and political conditions, allowed by provincial and territorial regulation, be responsive to housing needs identified through needs assessment, and supported by the community.

Ensure that some tools that are immediately implementable are included in the strategy
Immediate actions will show results, keep up the interest, and bring support.

Keep long-term goals in mind
Address priorities first but do not loose site of long-term goals and sustainability.

Integrate efforts of all municipal departments and community partners
Different municipal departments (finance, planning, housing, public works) bring a variety of perspectives, experience and approaches. All municipal departments need to be actively involved throughout the drafting process and must support the recommended directions, tools, and plans.

Keep Council informed
Try to bring all members of Council on board. They should be actively involved or well informed at every step of the drafting process.

Resources

- CMHC. The Affordable Housing Ideas, a web-based compendium of information on a wide range of affordable housing tools, with case studies and bibliographies, located within the Affordable Housing section of the CMHC Web site. (In preparation as of May 2002).

- The Municipal Research and Services Center. Tool Kit of Affordable Housing Measures. Available at Web site **www.mrsc.org/textaht.htm**

- Boulder, Colorado. A Tool Kit of Housing Options. 1999. Covers 30 municipal tools for improving housing affordability. For each tool, the report provides a description, the action needed to implement it, the costs involved, timing, and any problems or issues involved. Available from the Department of Housing and Human Services, City of Boulder, tel.: (303) 441-4195; e-mail: **housingstrat@ci.boulder.co.us**

- Ed Starr. *The Municipal Role in Meeting Ontario's Affordable Housing Needs: An Environmental Scan of Municipal Initiatives and Practices,* 2001. Prepared for the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI). Reviews the full range of tools to address affordable housing needs with case studies from across the country. Available from OPPI, tel.: 1 800 668-1448; Web site **www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/**

- Richard Drdla Associates. *Municipal Regulatory Initiatives: Providing for Affordable Housing,* 1998. Prepared for CMHC. Available from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation,tel: 1 800 668-2642.

- Ray Tomalty, A. Hercz and P. Spurr. *Municipal Planning for Affordable Housing,* 2000. Prepared for CMHC. Provides detailed information on the use of six planning/fiscal tools by municipalities to encourage the production of affordable housing. Covers inclusionary zoning, density bonusing, alternative development standards, development charges and performance based zoning. Available from CMHC, tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

- Homegrown Solutions is a partnership initiative of CMHC, the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA), the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF). The initiative is funded by CMHC and administered by CHRA. It provides grants to encourage communities to pursue innovative housing solutions for low-to-moderate-income households. The program's Web site **www.hgrown.org** has a catalogue of existing success stories and ongoing initiatives.

- Tenants' Rights Action Coalition. Planning Tools for Affordable Housing, 1998. A summary of municipal planning tools in British Columbia oriented towards the creation of affordable housing. Density bonuses, mixed-use development, infill development, development cost levies, and public consultation are covered. Available from TRAC, tel.: (604) 255-3099.

Chapter 6: Implementation

Introduction

Implementation is "Part Two" of any affordable housing strategy–it involves its own set of procedures and problems, and requires its own timeframe, set of resources, communication plan and leadership. While one cannot provide detailed guidance on implementing specific action plans, some general considerations and suggestions may prove helpful.

Implementation Vehicles

Each component of the strategy's action plan should be implemented through means suitable to that specific tool. However, there are a number of municipal vehicles that could aid in the implementation of a broad range of tools. This may include:

- strategic planning vehicles
- planning and zoning vehicles
- administrative vehicles
- funding vehicles.

Strategic planning vehicles

A critical implementation step is to integrate the affordable housing strategy with the overall strategic direction of the municipality and its key management, policy and planning documents and activities. This includes:

- capital works plan
- corporate strategic plan
- economic development strategy.

These documents generally represent the most strategic level of corporate planning and need to reflect the goals and main policies making up the affordable housing strategy.

Official community plans

The corporate planning document most directly linked to the affordable housing strategy will be the official community plan. Legislation in most provinces and territories require that community plans contain provisions defining the amount, form and character of housing in the community. In some provinces–such as B.C., Ontario and Quebec–plans must also cover policies that relate more directly to housing affordability and social planning goals.

Thus, housing policies within community plans can provide an effective framework for the implementation of many components of the municipality's affordable housing strategy, especially tools related to land use, development guidelines/standards, planning standards, density, housing mix, or the spatial location of housing.

Implementation Vehicles

City of Winnipeg

As part of developing its housing strategy, the City of Winnipeg prepared a draft Housing Implementation Framework that identifies the following implementation mechanisms as central to the delivery of the City's Housing Policy:

- The City of Winnipeg's Housing Team and Decentralized Delivery (neighbourhood-based housing teams)
- The Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve Fund
- A Single Window Project Secretariat

The Framework also identifies Housing Improvement Zones within the city's neighbourhoods. These are areas needing the greatest amount of intervention and housing assistance. Fourteen have been designated, and the City has targetted three to start implementation. The City intends to use a combination of municipal planning/building regulations and bylaws along with financial incentives to encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing and the development of new housing in the improvement zones.

Source: City of Winnipeg. *Draft Housing Implementation Framework*, March, 2000. Available from: Urban Planning Co-ordinator, City of Winnipeg, tel.: (204) 986-5044.

The community plan as an implementation vehicle

City of Kamloops

The Social Planning and Affordable Housing Sections of KAMPLAN (1997) provide a comprehensive set of policies designed to facilitate the provision of affordable housing. Policies focus on:

- ensuring a mix of housing types within each neighbourhood to accommodate a broad range of housing needs and lifestyles through comprehensive development zones
- encouraging infill over peripheral development
- encouraging higher densities and intensification
- expediting tracking applications for special needs and social housing projects
- supporting variances and zoning changes to permit unique forms of housing
- using housing agreements for unique projects (garden and secondary suites)
- considering grants-in-lieu of development cost charges payments
- waiving building charges and municipal fees
- relaxing servicing requirements for special needs and social housing projects upon application
- partnering into unique housing projects (using surplus City land or a portion of the proceeds from the sale of City land through a Housing Reserve Fund).

Contact: Director, Development Services Department, City of Kamloops, tel.: (250) 828-3572.

Moreover, community plans typically express a local government's intent to undertake future action on other major issues such as the environment, economic development and social policy. Thus, the plan can act as a way of integrating these strategic policies and co-ordinating implementation over time (see box).

Zoning bylaws and housing agreements

Many of the tools used to encourage the creation, preservation or rehabilitation of affordable housing may be implemented through changes to the master-zoning bylaw, which in turn may require amendment to the official community plan. For instance, the master zoning bylaw can be used to implement tools such as:

- permit accessory suites in all residential zones
- allow a greater range of housing types (for example, detached, duplex, semi-detached, fourplexes, townhouses) as permitted uses in residential zones
- make more affordable housing types a permitted instead of a discretionary use
- require major developments to dedicate a minimum percentage of dwelling units as non-market housing
- permit some shared facility arrangements
- permit density bonusing under certain conditions
- permit very small unit/lot sizes under certain conditions

One zoning mechanism that facilitates a more comprehensive implementation of housing policy strategies is comprehensive development zoning, which is used to provide incentives to increase the provision of affordable and special needs housing. In British Columbia, it is used to increase flexibility in allocating density and land uses on particular sites, usually large and under single ownership.

Comprehensive development zoning allows the municipality and developer to customize the zoning applicable to a site within the context of the official community plan, and also allows municipalities to increase densities and relax building envelopes in return for affordable housing or site amenities. Thus, it can serve as

a vehicle for implementing a range of affordability tools including higher densities, inclusionary zoning, density bonusing and contributions to municipal housing reserves (see box).

Zoning bylaws as implementing vehicles

Comprehensive Development Zone, Burnaby, B.C.

Burnaby continues to use conventional zoning in most of the municipality, but on certain sites–especially those that are currently zoned for low-density development but where higher density, mixed-use projects would be more appropriate–it utilizes comprehensive development zoning. The uses permitted within a comprehensive development zone may include any of the general land use classifications of the Burnaby Zoning By-Law. It allows for exceptions to the applicable building regulations and strives for an improved relationship between the various parts of the proposed development. The zoning bylaw may require inclusionary housing or allow for density bonuses in exchange for commitments to build affordable housing and provide amenities on specific land parcels.

Source: Ray Tomalty et al. *Municipal Planning for Affordable Housing,* 2000. Prepared for CMHC. Available from the Canadian Housing Information Centre, tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

Housing Agreements may be used in association with Comprehensive Development Zoning. This is an agreement between a property owner and the municipality enabling municipalities to set conditions with respect to type of tenure, rent levels and rent increases, the administration and management of units, and the availability of housing units to particular groups of people.

Single windows

Given the complex arrangements that are often necessary in order to bring together the resources to fund new affordable housing projects, some municipalities are putting in place a "single window" approach to simplify and streamline the process for applicants. This function brings together—in a central location—representatives of the funding agencies and their resources, and allows for an efficient co-ordination of activities across funding agencies, simplifying and facilitating what is a potentially confusing process (see box).

Single Windows

Winnipeg's Single Window Project Secretariat*

The City of Winnipeg recommended the establishment of a Single Window Project Secretariat to co-ordinate the approval process involving three public jurisdictions providing housing support directly or via complementary programs. The Secretariat would be established with representatives of funding organizations, particularly the three levels of government. The role of the Secretariat is to assist community groups in their advocacy role and in seeking funding, review housing project applications submitted by neighbourhood organizations for financial support under the City's Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve Fund, as well as financial support under existing or new federal, provincial and territorial housing and community support programs (Neighbourhoods Alive Program, SCPI and RRAP).

*This was re-named the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative in 2001.

Source: Planning and Land Use Division, Property and Development Services Department, City of Winnipeg. Contact: Urban Planning Co-ordinator, City of Winnipeg, tel.: (204) 986-5044.

Non-Profit Housing Corporations

Another convenient implementing vehicle is the housing society or corporation. Until the early 1990s, most municipal non-profit housing corporations were created to deliver federal/provincial and territorial social housing unit allocations and they now manage portfolios of existing housing. They now face funding challenges of fulfilling their mandates with many moving towards a strategy that brings together sources from a wide range of donors, including government, (see box) community and philanthropic foundations, including both monetary and non-monetary forms of support (see Chapter 7 - Partnerships).

Moreover, some municipal non-profit housing corporations have moved beyond their traditional role and now serve to help implement a wider array of housing tools. The Peel Non-Profit Housing Corporation was established in 1976 to provide affordable housing. It is now developing innovative projects and working to build private sector partnerships (see Chapter 7 - Partnerships). The City of Winnipeg has a Housing Rehabilitation Corporation that will be playing an expanded role as part of the City's housing strategy (see box).

Senior government funding

The federal government emphasizes capacity building measures such as providing financial support for special initiatives, undertaking demonstration projects (for example, through grant programs such as ACT and Homegrown Solutions), offering mortgage insurance, and conducting research and policy analysis. CMHC funds a number of programs and special initiatives such as the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. In December 1999, Human Resources Development Canada announced the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiatives. Eighty per cent of the funding under SCPI is targetted to Canada's 10 major cities most affected by homelessness.

Non-Profit Housing Corporations

Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation

The Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation (WHRC) has expanded its mandate to support the City's Housing Policy. In addition, to continuing its role of property management, the WHRC will play a supportive role in providing technical assistance to community organizations preparing housing proposals for approval and take on management roles in partnership with community organizations. As part of this, it will try to facilitate strategic public and private sector housing investment.

Source: Planning and Land Use Division, Property and Development Services Department, City of Winnipeg. Contact: Urban Planning Co-ordinator, City of Winnipeg, tel.: (204) 986-5044.

Housing Trust Funds

Saskatoon's Social Housing Reserve

The City of Saskatoon established a Social Housing Reserve in 1989 to provide funding for the City's 5% contribution to social housing. The City continues to own a significant portion of the developable land in the region in its Land Bank, and sells land in the market place, and 10% of the proceeds from sales are provided to the Housing Reserve on an on-going basis. This Reserve has evolved to provide funding for a range of housing activities, including supporting some community development activities aimed at building the capacity of the community to address housing needs. In 2000, the City provided $840,000 of funding for 350 units of affordable housing.

Source: City Planning Branch, Community Services Department, City of Saskatoon. Contact: Housing Facilitator, City of Saskatoon, tel.: (306) 975-7666.

Housing Trust Funds

A housing trust fund is dedicated to supporting affordable housing production and can serve as an important vehicle for financing various elements of a strategy. Trust funds typically provide grants, forgivable loans and long-term loans to cover such items as: purchase and renovation costs, pre-development costs, outstanding real estate taxes and marketing costs. Funds may also be used to purchase development sites and lease or sell them to private or non-profit developers at below-market rates. Awards are typically made through a competitive request for proposal process during which projects are ranked on a number of pre-established criteria. Support is often conditional on a guarantee that units supported remain affordable to the intended beneficiaries for the longest possible period. Awards typically encourage leveraging of other public and private resources. In some cases, the funds are directly applied to building affordable housing.

The funds are typically administered by a municipal agency responsible for housing matters, but it is common for a community board to be established to oversee strategic decision-making. Sources of revenue for the trust fund may include linkage fees, municipal appropriations, real estate transfer taxes, or proceeds from development activities. These locally-sourced funds may be complemented by monies coming from senior government housing programs, where available.

Since the mid-1980s, five trust funds have been set up in Canadian cities: in Saskatoon, Vancouver, Whistler, Banff and Winnipeg. Local housing providers are campaigning to set up funds in three other jurisdictions: New Brunswick, Montréal, and Edmonton.

Revolving Loan Funds
Revolving loan funds, whereby money is re-used as loans are paid back, is one way of developing a sustainable fund for the provision of affordable housing. Financial assistance can be provided to affordable housing providers and to low-and moderate-income homebuyers as well as to tenants. As loans are repaid, the funds can then be lent out to other providers or households. Usually, a lower interest rate is charged than the commercial rate.

Steps to Develop an Implementation Plan

A number of steps can be recommended for carrying out the implementation phase of a municipal affordable housing strategy:

- create a body to oversee implementation
- prepare an implementation schedule
- prepare a budget and organize administrative resources
- assign responsibilities
- put in place an implementation-stage communications campaign.

Create a Body to Oversee Implementation

The municipality may want to establish a task force or committee to oversee implementation of the strategy. Committee members could be drawn from the range of individuals and representatives that participated in the public consultation process leading up to the adoption of the strategy. Such a committee could be responsible for:

- establishing a time line and budget for implementation
- reviewing project applications where municipal support is requested
- reviewing municipal land and other resources available for implementing the strategy

Revolving Loan Funds

Toronto's Capital Revolving Fund for Affordable Housing

In Toronto, the Capital Revolving Fund for Affordable Housing (CRF) was set up as a way for the City to provide financial assistance to eligible affordable housing developers. Through equity contributions and direct financial assistance, the CRF helps produce housing that is below market prices. CRF is intended to help lever additional capital, which together with CRF funding will make projects more feasible. An external Reference Group provides advice to City staff on the use of the CRF, setting general priorities for the fund and assessing the viability of submissions. Membership represents Toronto Council, the development and property management industry, the financial sector, the community-based housing and services sector, and the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The CRF is financially managed by the City's Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer. Toronto Council determines how the CRF is replenished and approves all projects receiving assistance through the CRF.

Source: Strategic Policies and Priorities Committee, City of Toronto. Establishment of a Capital Revolving Fund for Affordable Housing and the Social Housing Reserve Fund, January 21, 1999. Available from Community and Neighbourhood Services, City of Toronto, tel.: (416) 392-0051.

- working with community groups to bring together the partnerships necessary for implementation of the affordable housing strategy
- increasing awareness of housing affordability problems in the municipality (see "Sell" the Strategy below)
- facilitating development of implementation vehicles, such as housing trusts or revolving funds
- making recommendations to Council concerning barriers to implementing the strategy
- monitoring the implementation process and the achievement of targets within stated timeframes.

Prepare an Implementation Schedule

Not all action plans can be implemented simultaneously. The municipality will want to set priorities for short- and long-term action by creating an implementation time line. For instance, in the short term, a municipality might want to implement density bonusing by incorporating it into the zoning bylaw. In the long term, a municipality might want to build expenditure requirements into its budget that would allow it to create a housing reserve fund (see box).

Implementation Plan

The time line should also take into account the need to dovetail implementation of the affordable housing strategy with other municipal activities. For example, the municipality may be launching an economic development campaign or a growth management campaign that could be linked to implementation of the affordable housing strategy. The planning and implementation process can also benefit from being synchronized with the political cycle, such as, election campaigns where implementation issues can be raised as well as anticipated changes in Council composition.

Vehicle to oversee implementation

Québec City Housing Strategy

Implementation of Québec City's Housing Strategy is to be ensured through the actions of two committees. The first, an external committee, is comprised of individuals involved in the housing field, most of whom had participated in the strategy consultation process. This committee will meet twice yearly and has a mandate to:

- ensure the implementation of the strategy and its programs
- keep abreast of the changes affecting the housing market in the city
- study the existing programs and policies regarding housing in the municipality and make recommendations regarding needed changes
- identify new actions required to meet housing goals
- co-ordinate action to be taken with provincial and federal governments in order to meet housing needs for Québec City residents.

A second internal municipal committee is mandated to ensure synergy among municipal departments' actions with regard to meeting housing policy objectives.

Source: Ville de Québec. Division de l'aménagement du territoire, Centre de développement économique et urbain. Politique d'habitation. Novembre, 2000. Available at: **www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/fr/commhtml/622.html**

Finally, it is important that the time line be planned in a way that takes into account the limitations in resources and staff that affect the local government and community partners. This can be accomplished by ensuring that everyone involved in implementation of the strategy is properly consulted and that expectations of their performance are reasonable.

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing – Regina

The Advisory Committee made a total of 81 recommendations to Council. A key recommendation was to set up a new Housing Commission to oversee the implementation of the strategy. The implementation plan included the party responsible for implementation, a summary of the proposed action, a suggested time frame, and a date by which the responsible agency should report back to the monitoring agency. The time frame had three categories: immediate (within 6 months), medium-term: (6-18 months) and long-term (1.5-3 years). A sample from the implementation plan follows.

Party Responsible for Implementation	Recommendation	Suggested Time Frame	Report Back By:
City Administration	That in 2000, the City of Regina engage an outside consultant to conduct an investigation into how tax increment financing could work in Regina's downtown and North Central areas.	Immediate	March 2001
City Administration	That the City design and implement an ongoing marketing strategy to promote the benefits of living in Regina.	Medium-term	March 2002
University of Regina	That the University of Regina aggressively market its on-campus student housing for spring and summer conferences to bring in new revenues that can be used to maintain affordable on-campus housing for students.	Long-term	September 2002

Source: *The Future of Housing in Regina: Laying the Groundwork.* Prepared by the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing, July 2000. Available from: Housing Co-ordinator, Community Services Department, City of Regina, tel.: (306) 777-7533.

Prepare a Budget and Organize Administrative Resources

Of course every effort should be made to minimize the administrative resources needed to implement the strategy. For instance, the municipality could build capacity through facilitating partnerships with community-based organizations (see Chapter 7 – Partnerships). However, some administrative expenditures may be desirable. For instance, the strategy may have identified the need for a new full- or part-time staff position in order to ensure proper implementation of the strategy. A Housing Facilitator may be required in order to identify and form network alliances within the community, and to facilitate access to resources across municipal departments. For instance, in 1989, Saskatoon established the Social Housing Advisory Committee (SHAC) to advise City Council on housing issues, and in 1996, SHAC hired a Housing Facilitator to assist in the development of new mechanisms and new partners in the community.

Implementing a comprehensive affordable housing strategy may require a range of other skills and resources as well. This could include expertise in management (comprising property portfolio management and financial), administration (housing registers, property administration, resident caretakers, etc.), project development and property maintenance, policy research and analysis (including demographic analysis), inspections and bylaw enforcement, and tenant counselling and support services. This expertise may be available through a variety of municipal departments or it may be centralized within a municipal department such as the Housing Centre in Vancouver.

The implementation phase may also involve creating or updating a database that facilitates the identification of local resources. For example, a municipality may establish a land inventory information system to track the changing status of vacant and municipal-owned land available for residential development.

"Sell" the Strategy

Maintaining public support and political commitment is the key to successful implementation of an affordable housing strategy. During the implementation stage, the communication and consultation campaign will shift from informing the public about options and inviting input to building support for the chosen action plans and increasing acceptance of measures that may have negative connotations. It will also be important that inaccurate information does not spread and that misunderstandings concerning the strategy are quickly cleared up.

The best way to lessen the impact of opposing views and misunderstandings during implementation of the affordable housing strategy is to present a clear description of and rationale for what is involved. Obviously, the strategy itself should be available to the public in a convenient format and a summary should be widely circulated. The summary could be accompanied by a FAQ (frequently asked questions) sheet dealing with the key issues, especially those that may prove to be controversial. A newsletter is a convenient outreach tool to keep neighbourhoods updated on implementation activities.

Implementation-stage communications

Saskatoon's Communications Sub-Committee

As part of the implementation plan for Saskatoon's Strategy Plan on Social Housing, the Social Housing Advisory Committee set up a sub-committee to oversee communications. The sub-committee is described as follows:

Purpose:	Establish and maintain a high level of contact, liaison and sharing of information with the broad community to facilitate general awareness of social housing issues and the role that SHAC plays in this area.
Activity:	Very active, initially meeting every three weeks
Membership:	- media - public, community groups - housing agencies - social services agencies - building and development industry

Source: City Planning Branch, Community Services Department, City of Saskatoon. *Saskatoon's Housing Advisory Committee Strategic Plan,* 1996. Available from Housing Facilitator, City of Saskatoon, tel.: (306) 975-7666.

All the communications material should highlight the economic and other benefits of the strategy, such as its potential to attract new employers, stimulate new employment in the housing industry, and improve the quality of life for direct beneficiaries and the community at large.

Potential Problems and Solutions

The strategy is opposed by organized groups in the community

Opposition may be expected from those who will be asked to help pay to implement the strategy (for example, commercial developers may resent the imposition of a new linkage fee). The municipality should have a plan for dealing with organized opposition to the strategy. For instance, the municipality could approach a prominent member of the opposing (or a related) group to get his or her endorsement of the strategy.

Restrictive municipal bylaws and regulations prevent implementation

Existing bylaws and regulations may contain language that prevents implementation of some elements of the action plan. For instance, engineering requirements may prevent the use of alternative development standards or zoning bylaws may prevent the building of granny flats. To address this, the municipality could undertake a thorough review of bylaws, regulation and other controls to eliminate barriers to implementing the action plans.

Provincial and territorial or federal legislation or regulations may undermine implementation of some aspects of the action plan
In some cases, the action plans adopted as part of an affordable housing strategy may depend on legislative changes from provincial and federal governments. For instance, changes to the building code may be necessary in order to allow for smaller single room occupancy housing in renovated structures. In these cases, municipalities could work with sector organizations to obtain the required changes.

Checklist for Success

Implementation should be directed at community capacity building
Because of urgent housing priorities, many municipalities view their strategies as working documents to be used by Council, staff and community-based organizations to respond to housing needs. As such, implementation tends to be capacity building and relies on support from the community organizations and residents.

Support of elected officials is essential
An overriding factor to its success is the support of elected officials in pursuing the strategies over time. The housing strategy implemented by the City of North Vancouver owes its effectiveness to consistent support since the 1980s from Council to facilitating the provision of affordable housing within a municipality it recognizes as "a community of renters".

Be flexible
Implementation of an affordable housing strategy must acknowledge the need for flexibility, and allow adjustment to changing economic conditions and market variations. For example, in a market downturn, certain tools such as density bonusing, will not be an effective way to generate affordable housing. This means a strategy should be dynamic–a "living document" that is monitored and adjusted to preserve its effectiveness in responding to housing needs (see Chapter 8 – Evaluation and Monitoring).

Develop a transparent and inclusive implementation process
The implementation process should be clearly outlined and as transparent as possible with roles and responsibilities clearly identified. Involve all partners and parties early in the implementation process to ensure the highest level of co-ordination and maximize the contribution the wider community makes to implementing the strategy.

Use graphic examples in communication activities
Communication activities during the implementation stages should present evidence of the need for concrete action on affordable housing. Bring the problem home to the public by describing how needy groups such as elderly people and children are affected by the lack of affordable housing in the community.

Resources

- Brooks, Mary. *A Workbook to Create a Housing Trust Fund,* 1999. Prepared for CMHC. Provides step-by-step advice on launching and conducting a community-based campaign to create a local affordable housing trust fund.
  Available from CMHC,
  tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

- Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security. *Density Bonus Provisions of the Municipal Act - A Guide and Model Bylaw,* 1997. *Supportive Housing for Seniors Policy and Bylaw Guide,* 1999. Both of these documents are termed "policy and bylaw guides." They are comprehensive toolkits for implementing specific tools for affordable housing. Available at Web site **www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/housing/**

- The Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) Program is a partnership initiative of CMHC, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA) and the Canadian Renewal Association (CHRA). The initiative is funded by CMHC with FCM being contracted by CMHC to administer the program. ACT provides funding for innovative projects aimed at increasing housing affordability and choice, to demonstrate and encourage dissemination of local regulatory reform across Canada. Many projects involve innovations pertaining to zoning, infill, conversion, regulatory barriers and alternative development standards. Reports are available at Web site **www.actprogram.com/english/projects.asp**

- Steve Pomeroy. *Exploring New Financing Opportunities to Support Affordable Housing in Canada,* 2000. Prepared for the Canada Housing and Renewal Association. Explores new financing opportunities in affordable housing initiatives. Discusses tax measures to support new investment certificates for affordable housing, increasing access to ownership, more flexible underwriting and tax reform, opportunities for securitization, tax expenditures, etc. Available from the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, tel.: (613) 594-3007

- Deborah Kraus and Margaret Eberle. *New ways to create affordable housing: results of a national survey of housing providers: Final report,* 1998. Prepared for CMHC. Investigates activities being undertaken by the non-profit, co-operative and municipal housing sectors in Canada to develop affordable housing without traditional government housing supply programs. Discusses the interest, willingness and capacity of respondents. Also describes innovative projects, key features, and the tools, mechanisms, information, and communication that are needed for the future. Available from CMHC, tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

- Peter Malpass and Robin Means (editors). *Implementing Housing Policy.* Published by the Open University Press, Buckingham, England, 1993. Available from CMHC, tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

Chapter 7: Partnerships

Introduction

In the past, affordable housing, especially social housing geared to low-and moderate-income households, was developed primarily through federal, provincial and territorial programs in conjunction with local partners (for example, municipal or private non-profits). Today, the concept of cooperation and partnership in housing is taking on new meaning. Only a limited number of programs are still available across Canada to subsidize the construction of new housing or to renovate existing dwellings. Instead, in most Canadian communities, municipalities are increasingly working with community agencies, the development industry and financial institutions to meet growing housing needs.

A municipal housing affordability strategy provides a vehicle to identify and develop potential partnerships. The process of developing a strategy raises awareness in the community of affordability problems and stimulates creative thinking about the potential for synergies among agencies, even those that might not otherwise consider the issue as part of their mandate (for example, pension funds, banks or public utilities).

An affordable housing partnership is an arrangement between two or more parties who agree to work together to achieve shared or complementary affordable housing objectives. They often use innovative financing mechanisms, share resources, bring together many different organizations, leverage existing equity in land and/or buildings and sometimes use innovative tenure arrangements.

A partnership is a relationship with at least one of the following characteristics:

- joint investment of resources (such as, time, work, funding, material, expertise and information)

The Benefits of Partnerships

- Help groups achieve common or complementary goals: Partnerships enable participating groups to achieve common or complementary goals through co-operative efforts. These goals may be limited to housing objectives or may encompass broader community goals such as community revitalization, and training and skills development.
- Maximize limited resources: Working together allows groups to benefit from a wider range of resources: financing, land, expertise, leadership, contacts and credibility.
- Leverage investment: Partnerships are often formed to bring together sufficient financial resources to make a project economically feasible.
- Provide mechanism for innovative financing: Although financing is not the only reason groups form partnerships, it can be a major motivating factor.
- Minimize risks: Partnerships can help to minimize the significant capital and financial risks involved in developing or renovating housing.
- Enhance credibility of participant groups: For example, established charitable organizations, social service agencies and municipalities may have greater credibility with banks and credit unions than smaller community-based groups.
- Respond to community needs: Housing developed through partnerships has the potential to be more responsive to consumer or community needs.
- Increase fundraising ability: By associating with a non-profit charitable organization the ability to raise funds can be greatly improved. Also, non-profit organizations can issue tax receipts to donors.

Source: CMHC, Guide to *Affordable Housing Partnerships*, 1998. Available from: Canadian Housing Information Centre tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

- shared liability or risk-taking (and sharing of the benefits)
- shared authority and responsibility.

Types of Partnerships

Although the variety of partnership arrangements found in Canada is extremely broad, most arrangements fall under the following four categories:

- demonstration projects
- leveraging resources
- community non-profit housing corporations
- strategic investments

Demonstration projects
The creation of affordable housing can be stimulated in a community if the public sector takes the lead in showing that it can be done without undue financial risk. Demonstration projects have been initiated by a number of municipalities across the country in partnership with the private or non-profit sector. Municipal contributions are often of strategic importance (leadership, management expertise, small grants for consulting work) but often form a minor component of the overall project value. Nepean's Meridian Life-Lease Seniors Housing is a good example of this approach (see Box).

Leveraging resources
A municipality can bring a combination of resources to the table by offering its private or non-profit partner regulatory or financial concessions. The municipality may offer free or discounted land or buildings, preferential leases, or financial support to independent developers, builders, or non-profit housing providers. Regulatory concessions might include streamlining the development process and financial concessions could take the form of development charge or property tax discounts, waivers of municipal fees for planning approvals and permits. These resources and concessions

Demonstration projects

Meridian Life-Lease Seniors Housing

The City of Nepean initiated the project to demonstrate that it is possible to build this type of seniors' housing at no cost to the sponsor. The result is a $10 million, 66-unit life-lease project for seniors, called the Meridian. Construction was completed in December 1999 and all units were quickly occupied. The City created an arm's length non-profit corporation to manage the design, construction and sales for the life-lease project. The corporation was run by an interim board composed of senior municipal staff. Upon completion, responsibility for the corporation was transferred to a board elected by the residents of the Meridian. The City of Nepean provided the following support:

- $35,000 to retain a development consultant
- a $100,000 loan to help with marketing and sales,
- its services as an agent to purchase the land from CMHC,
- staff time to manage the project

On its own, the non-profit corporation obtained a $45,000 proposal development fund loan from CMHC and negotiated a CMHC-insured $7.5 million mortgage loan to help finance the land purchase and construction. Deposits for unit reservations covered the remaining costs. The city demonstrated that there is demand for seniors' housing, particularly, apartment-oriented housing and shown how to make it self-financing. It is a model other groups can follow.

Source: *Partnership Courier,* June 2000. Available from: Canadian Centre for Public Private Partnerships in Housing, Assisted Housing Division, CMHC, tel.: (613) 748-2391.

Leveraging resources

The Amik Housing Development

Project Amik will be the first affordable housing project under the City of Toronto's Let's Build program, working in partnership with Frontiers foundation, an Aboriginal-focused charitable housing provider. The project will generate 74 units of affordable rental housing to over 100 low-income people including singles, seniors, families and children.

By using capital funding from the City of Toronto and the federal government, along with private fundraising, Frontiers is able to significantly reduce its mortgage costs. In turn, these savings are passed on as affordable rents to low-income tenants. Once constructed, this project will not receive any operating subsidies.

Capital costs and contribution breakdown:

Source of Funds	Contribution	Amount
City of Toronto	Value of land Capital grant Waived fees and charges Total	$1,570,000 $888,000 $166,000 $2,624,000
Federal Government	CMHC Conversion RRAP CMHC Disabled RRAP HDRC Apprenticeship Training Total	$792,000 $150,000 $84,000 $1,026,000
Frontiers Foundation	Fundraising	$370,000
Project Cost		$7,500,000
Frontiers Project Mortgage		$2,814,000

Source: Let's Build Program, City of Toronto. *The Amik Housing Development, Project Information Fact Sheet*, 2001. Available from Toronto Let's Build Program, Community and Neighbourhood Services, City of Toronto, tel.: (416) 392-0051.

are intended to leverage or augment the contribution of other participants (public, non-profit, private) in order to stimulate affordable housing development.

Toronto's Let's Build program is an example of this type of partnership. The two key elements of the Let's Build program are the "housing first" policy for disposal of surplus City–owned land and buildings, and the establishment of a capital revolving fund to facilitate the financing of partnership projects. Let's Build has at its disposal a tool kit of municipal incentives to increase economic viability and encourage a range of affordable housing initiatives.

Community-based non-profit corporations
Over the years, municipalities have partnered with a broad range of other housing stakeholders to establish community-based non-profit housing corporations. The Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership is a community-owned non-profit corporation that brings together a wide array of community partners (see box).

Strategic investments
In a number of cases, municipalities are making strategic investments in renovation or new construction in order to trigger broader private investment in a declining neighbourhood. An example of this is Montréal's Program for Rehabilitating Boarded up or Vacant buildings (see box).

Community-based non-profit housing corporations

The Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership

The Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) is a community- owned non-profit corporation designed to generate capital investment for affordable home ownership. Interests involved include the Chamber of Commerce, City Staff and Councillors, financial institutions, Saskatchewan Tribal Council, Saskatoon Home Builders, mental health services, Quint Development Corporation and the Saskatoon Housing Authority.

The partnership has developed a pool of investment funds that is used to finance housing projects that would not normally be supported by conventional lenders due to the perceived risks in working with non-conventional markets. To date, grant contributions total $520,000. In addition, a consortium of mortgage lenders has committed $3.5 million in loan funds at below-market interest rates.

Source: City Planning Branch, Community Services Department, City of Saskatoon. *Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership, Draft Concept Outline*, July 2000. Available from Housing Facilitator, City of Saskatoon, tel.: (306) 975-7666.

Strategic Investments

Montréal's Central Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy

The Central Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy is a multi-program initiative for the rehabilitation of 10 distressed districts in the City of Montréal. Over the first five-year period, $36.5 million in federal/provincial and territorial/ municipal funding and about $447.3 million in private investment has been made. One of the programs involves subsidies to property owners to renovate, recycle, or demolish and reconstruct buildings, occupied or vacant.

About $8 million has been spent on this program in one of the targetted districts, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. The City's partner in the district is the Hochelaga Maisonneuve Urban Development Collective, a non-profit organization that was founded in 1986 in response to the alarming state of housing in the neighbourhood. The Collective promotes the strategy in the area by publicizing opportunities in the local real estate market (for example, boarded-up or vacant buildings ready for renovations that qualify for potential subsidies).

Source: Housing Department, City of Montréal, tel.: (514) 872-8237.

Steps to Develop a Partnership

The following steps can be used to set up a partnership relationship:

- determine objectives
- identify partners
- structure the partnership
- implement the partnership

Determine Objectives

As a form of strategy implementation, housing partnerships need to "fit" within the framework of issues and objectives laid out in the municipality's affordable housing strategy. Within this framework, there will be a need to further refine the individual partnership objectives, including: specification of the project-specific client group, tenure, price or rental range, housing form, services and facilities, timing of development, preliminary concept, business plan, and ancillary objectives such as community economic development or skills development.

The objectives should be translated into a business plan specifying a feasible housing concept, financial requirements, available local resources and the role of potential partners.

Identify Partners

It is the combination of organizations active in different aspects of community life and business activities that enables partnerships to create value and produce results that the partners could not create on their own. But finding the right partners can be a time-consuming process. This step involves the identification of potential partners, taking into consideration skills and resources needed by the project as well as the understanding of the needs of the potential partners.

Municipalities can serve as one of the partnering parties or can promote partnerships among other parties. Partnership candidates include:

- Municipal, provincial and territorial, and federal governments. They can provide the regulatory/planning framework or financial assistance to make projects financially feasible.
- Community-based agencies: They may have housing development experience; all have a client base and links to support services and volunteers.
- Credit unions, banks, and other financial institutions: They represent a potential source of capital financing.
- Charitable foundations and philanthropic organizations: They may help fund project soft costs or serve as a potential source of capital financing.
- Developers, builders, architects and development consultants: If a project can be made economically feasible through partnership with the public sector, the private sector will build it.

A successful partnership may involve as few as two main actors (for example, the municipality and a non-profit housing provider) or it may embrace a broad range of community interests, such as, community groups, the non-profit or co-op sector, financial institutions and the private sector.

The consultation and communication process accompanying the development of the local strategy can serve as excellent opportunities to identify potential partners. For instance, some members of the Strategy Development Task Force may be suitable partners for municipal action or the municipality may use the Task Force meetings as a way of introducing potential

partners and eventually brokering an arrangement between them. Public consultation events will attract other potential partners and provide occasions for introductions and "comparing notes".

Structure the Partnership

Partnerships need to be defined in terms of the management structure, activities, resources, the relationships among the various partners and the time frame involved.

The management structure includes consideration of who does what, who is responsible for making what types of decisions and who reports to whom. Activities and resources should be based on the business plan and should be accompanied by an understanding of expected outcomes. Defining relationships includes specifying the contributions of each partner and the allocation of financial risk and legal liability involved in carrying out the partnership project.

The level of formality involved in structuring a partnership varies from a simple understanding and verbal agreement to complex, legally sanctioned agreements. For most purposes, however, it is recommended that the partnership structure be formalized into a Partnership Agreement (see box). Before signing a partnership agreement it is a good idea to get legal and financial advice.

Implement the Partnership

Implementation involves detailed scheduling and work planning, and developing a communications strategy. Work planning should include a clear statement of who is responsible for what aspect of implementing the partnership and realistic dates.

Partnership Agreements

A partnership agreement may include the following components:

- Activities (such as, purchasing old assets, renovating/redeveloping existing assets)
- Resources (capital, time and human resources)
- Relationships:
  - Partner contributions
  - Risk and liability among partners
  - Partnership Balance Sheet
- Cash Flow Management:
  - Responsibility for Cash Flow Management
  - Accounting Procedures and Controls
  - Reporting Requirements
- Decision-making Procedures (Board members, Steering Committee)
- Time Frame.

A communications strategy should include communication both internal and external to the partnership. Internal communication builds upon the relationships that were established during the initial search for, assessment of and choice of partners. The purpose is to continue to build awareness of each partner's needs, responsibilities and potential contributions. Regular meetings are considered a good way to conduct internal communications, supplemented by regular e-mail and telephone contact. The purpose of external communications is to build credibility of the partnership project in the wider community and to attract new partners needed to implement the project or program. Identify a key spokesperson for this purpose.

To ensure that the partnership is accomplishing what it set out to do, the objectives need to be transformed into clear and quantifiable goals. This is especially important when there is a sizable municipal or other government contribution that necessitates monitoring and reporting.

Monitoring and performance evaluation will usually feed into the monitoring and performance evaluation of the overall affordable housing strategy. One of the characteristics of successful partnerships is the ability to evolve and to find creative solutions to problems as they arise. Monitoring is a source of information that allows the partnership to adjust or change course if necessary.

Potential Problems and Solutions

Amount of time and energy required
A partnership process may represent a substantial time and energy investment for municipal staff. It is best to be prepared for this up-front and to allocate appropriate staff resources.

Mutual understanding can be a challenge
Because of contrasting values (for example, private versus public sector), it may be difficult for individuals from different types of organizations to understand one another. A partnership agreement can help clarify expectations and minimize opportunities for misunderstandings.

Conflict over control
The sometimes very complex financial and legal arrangements that characterize housing partnerships can blur lines of authority and control. A partnership agreement can help establish some clear lines of responsibility, allowing the partnership to be managed effectively and efficiently. One should also include a mechanism for dispute resolution in case of serious disagreements.

Risks can be high
Once a project is built, the municipality may lose control of the rents or prices charged to residents. The municipality should ensure that some form of indemnity and security (such as restrictive covenant) is in place to protect the municipality's long-term investment in a project.

Resources are limited
Partnerships cannot be expected to completely address the full range of affordable housing needs in a community: for those in deepest need, senior government funding will continue to be necessary.

Legal liability
Sometimes partnerships dissolve before they have resulted in concrete gains. In such cases, the municipality may be on the hook legally. To minimize this possibility, the municipality should ensure that partners can demonstrate development and financial capability.

Checklist for Success

Integrate partnerships with the affordable housing strategy
Partnerships can help in the development and the implementation of a strategy. Ensure that building partnerships is part and parcel of the strategy development process.

Be creative!
The strength of the housing partnership approach is that it addresses the needs of the community and harnesses local creativity rather than being bound by program dictates.

Choose partners well
Partnerships in housing usually develop out of mutual interest and need. Selecting the right partner is extremely critical and will be based not only on whether the other party has the right qualifications but also on similar values and cultures. Partners need to be positive and committed to the project.

Ensure expectations are realistic and clear
Make sure all partners gain from the partnership and that they understand and accept what the others will gain from the project. Help partners recognize what each partner is bringing to the partnership and accept their similarities and differences.

Keep communication channels open
Establish open and honest communications with your partners. Monitor the progress of the partnership and make this information available to all partners.

Keep joint projects manageable
Projects may need to be smaller to be manageable.

Resources

- Steve Pomeroy and Greg Lampert. *The Role of Public-Private Partnerships in Producing Affordable Housing: Assessment of the US Experience and Lessons for Canada,* 1998. Prepared for CMHC. Describes the range of mechanisms used in the U.S. to assemble the necessary financial resources to build an affordable housing project. Reviews history and case studies in the U.S. context and identifies opportunities to expand the use of partnerships in Canada.
  Available from CMHC,
  tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

- Lapointe Consulting, Price Waterhouse Coopers and Luba Serge. *Guide to Affordable Housing Partnerships,* 1999. Prepared for CMHC. Gives step-by-step advice on how to set up and carry out partnership agreements in the affordable housing sector.
  Available from CMHC,
  tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

- Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. *Imagine: Creating Effective Partnerships with Business, A Guide for Charities and Non-profits in Canada,* 1996.
  Available from the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, tel.: (416) 597-2293;
  e-mail: general@ccp.ca;
  Web site: **www.ccp.ca/**

- Grant Brennan and Tim Mercer. *Strategic Public-Private Partnering: a Guide for Nova Scotia Municipalities,* 1997. Prepared for Nova Scotia Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs. Does not deal specifically with affordable housing, but provides detailed advice on setting up partnerships.
  Available from Web site
  www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/fin/ppguide.stm

- British Columbia Ministry of Municipal Affairs. *Public-Private Partnerships: Guide for Local Government,* 1999.
  Available at Web site
  www.marh.gov.bc.ca/LGPOLICY/MAR/PPP

- *Partnership Courier.* The Canadian Centre for Public-Private Partnerships in Housing.
  Available from CMHC,
  tel.: 1 800 668-2642.

- CMHC's Canadian Centre for Public-Private Partnerships in Housing promotes and facilitates partnerships to increase the supply of affordable housing. The Centre gives advice on financial and regulatory solutions, experiments with new financing and tenure agreements and disseminates information on successful practices. The Centre also provides interest-free Proposal Development Funding loans and Mortgage Insurance (to assist groups secure mortgage financing). Telephone contacts:
  Atlantic Provinces: (902) 426-8430;
  Quebec: (514) 283-2203;
  Ontario: (416) 218-3341;
  Prairies: (403)515-3011;
  B.C.: (604) 666-4660.

Chapter 8: Evaluation and Monitoring

Introduction

Implementation of the affordable housing strategy can be strengthened by incorporating provisions for monitoring and evaluating progress towards the objectives laid out in the strategy. On this basis, the municipality and its partners can make the necessary adjustments to the strategy and its implementation mechanisms.

Steps to Develop a Monitoring and Reporting Program

The following steps can be used to set up a monitoring and reporting program:

- set up a sub-committee to design and implement the monitoring program
- design the monitoring system and select performance measures
- create a monitoring and reporting schedule
- collect monitoring data
- report monitoring results
- revise the action plans and/or targets.

Set up a Monitoring Sub-Committee

Although monitoring programs are usually launched only after the strategy is formally adopted, it is important that attention be paid to monitoring needs throughout the strategy development process. The earlier in the process the monitoring system is designed, the better. If it is thought out prior to conducting the needs assessment, data collection can be organized with an eye for the needs of long-term monitoring. Certainly, the monitoring system will need to be well defined by the time action plans are formulated.

Thus, a monitoring sub-committee should be struck by the Strategy Development Task Force at the outset to ensure that monitoring is an integral element of the whole strategy. The group should review reporting/monitoring needs and design a practical system to meet those needs. Specifically, the group should ensure that:

Benefits of a monitoring program

- Setting targets and monitoring performance allows all stakeholders to develop a clearer understanding of what the expected results are for each element of the action plan.
- It helps focus council's decision-making and helps municipal staff to understand the level and type of service delivery required.
- Monitoring can help municipalities develop budgets that are based on realistic costs and benefits, not just historical patterns.
- Accountability to council, senior management and taxpayers is improved because monitoring reports provide succinct information about the strategy's outcomes.
- By conducting well-researched program, project and service evaluations, ongoing investment can be defended and new resources can be put to productive use.
- Municipal officials have a better ability to make more informed decisions. Monitoring allows managers to delegate (for example, partnerships, proposal calls) with greater confidence, because their expectation of results are clearly set and they have a method for reviewing actual performance.
- In cases where concerns were raised in the community about the potential impact of affordable housing projects and programmes, monitoring reports can help track actual impacts.
- Although the monitoring plan will be primarily directed at improving the implementation of the municipality's housing strategy, it can have collateral benefits. For instance, the information collected for monitoring may be useful for designing, implementing or monitoring other municipal programs.

- a budget is set aside for developing and carrying out the monitoring component of the strategy
- the needs analysis component of the strategy is designed so as to lend itself to a monitoring program
- the action plans that are developed in order to address housing goals are shaped with the monitoring process in mind
- the monitoring program is linked with the municipal planning (for example, development approvals by the planning department) and financial system (for example, approval of a loan by the finance department under a revolving loan fund arrangement).

Design the Monitoring System and Select Performance Measures

Monitoring programs are usually based on the use of quantifiable performance measures and targets. These parameters simplify a complex subject to a few numbers that can be easily grasped and understood by policy makers and the general public.

Performance measures are of two basic types: "service output" measures that track efficiency of program delivery and "client benefit" measures that track the effectiveness of program outcomes in meeting their objectives.

Service output measures reflect whether programs, projects, service, and facilities are being developed as planned and whether they are fulfilling their intended purposes with the resources that were earmarked for them. Examples of service output measures would be the number of affordable units produced or rehabilitated or the number of new beds in shelters as a direct result of program implementation.

Client benefit measures track whether the strategy is having the desired effect, for example, whether it is achieving the strategy objectives in terms of improving housing affordability in the community. Examples of client benefit measures could include:

- vacancy rates
- client satisfaction
- waiting list for subsidized housing in the municipality
- average rents compared to average weekly wages.

Current values of performance measures are usually compared to reference points, such as, baseline conditions, targets, or thresholds (see Chapter 5 - Action Plan). Baseline conditions represent the original value of the parameter, which may have been determined during the needs analysis study or while the action plan was being formulated. Targets and thresholds are the parameters that were set up as part of the action planning process. Targets are measurable conditions that represent a goal or something to work towards, while thresholds are conditions or levels not to be exceeded. Performance measures can be expressed as raw numbers, percentages or ratios: all are acceptable as long as the form of expression allows for comparison over time.

A number of criteria can be applied in identifying the set of performance measures that will be used to monitor implementation of the strategy. They should:

- relate in a practical way to the objectives of the strategy and the specific tools being used
- be cost effective to collect
- be measurable with data available on a timely basis
- lend themselves to being compared with those used in other communities
- facilitate communication on progress towards implementing the strategy.

The following table suggests one possible model for linking key issues, goals, tools, objectives, performance measures and comparison values.

Sample design for a monitoring program

Key Issue	Goal	Sample Tool	Objective	Performance Measures	Base Line value (1999)	Current Value (2002)	Target (2005)
Lack of affordable rental opportunities for students.	Ensure that every student has access to affordable accommo-dation.	Donate municipal land to university for building student residences.	Increase number of student residence rooms.	Service Output: Number of student residence rooms produced on donated land.	0	50	100
				Client Benefit: Number of students on waiting list for student rooms.	200	100	20

Create a Monitoring and Reporting Schedule

This has two components, a data collection schedule and a reporting schedule.

For data collection, decide on the frequency with which each performance measure will be updated. Some performance measures are easily tracked annually. Others require more effort for data collection and could be monitored every three to five years.

The reporting schedule will depend on the data collection frequency and other factors, such as the reporting requirements of partnering agencies, and co-ordination with other planning schedules, such as the launch of a major revision to the community plan.

Collect Monitoring Data

Data for tracking performance can be obtained through a wide variety of means, including the following:

- satisfaction or opinion surveys
- focus groups
- inspection reports
- observer ratings
- demand statistics (such as, waiting lists or waiting times)
- utilization statistics
- demographic, social and economic data from sources such as Statistics Canada (see Chapter 3 - Needs Assessment)
- housing data from sources such as CMHC (see Chapter 3 - Needs Assessment)
- occurrence reports (for example, injuries to handicapped people living in non-adapted homes)
- complaints reports

Report Monitoring Results

Monitoring reports can take a variety of forms, such as report cards, annual reports, housing indicator bulletins, and state of housing reports. While they differ in the level of detail and complexity they offer, they should all cover the following points:

- the key issues addressed by the strategy and the objectives being sought
- the targets identified as part of the action plans and baseline levels
- accomplishments to date in terms of moving towards targets
- areas where progress is not being achieved and potential explanations
- recommendations for revisions to the strategy or its objectives.

To communicate the main trends to the general public, the monitoring report could be summarized for presentation in a newsletter or Web-site format. For example, Toronto offers a newsletter called *Housing in the City*, while Calgary's newsletter is called *Community Action Plan Bulletin.*

Revise the Action Plans and/or Targets

One of the main purposes of a monitoring program is to allow the municipality to revise action plans if necessary, revisit targets and reassess implementation priorities. For example Toronto's Let's Build Program has five years to demonstrate results. At that point its objectives and funding will be re-evaluated. In Portland, as a result of the monitoring and evaluation program, strategy targets were revised in order to suit a changing policy context.

Reporting monitoring results

Reporting on Calgary's Community Action Plan

Performance Measure	1998	1999	2000
Decrease the number of Aboriginal people who are homeless	In 1997, 22% of shelter users were Aboriginal.	The 1998 Homeless Count found that 18% of the homeless persons counted were Aboriginal.	The 2000 Homeless Count found that 19% of the homeless persons counted were Aboriginal.
Increase the number of low cost rental housing units	There were 8,447 low-cost rental units.	With the opening of Radisson Heights 9, there will be 2 additional units.	Administration conducted feasibility studies to increase the number of affordable housing units.
Increase the number of Private Landlord Rent Supplements (PLRS) accessed	There were 849 PLRS allocated units.	There were 1,024 PLRS allocated units.	There were 1,052 PLRS allocated units.
Increase the number of transitional housing units	There were 407 transitional/treatment beds	In 1999 June, there were 132 additional transitional units from the number existing in May 1998.	In 2000 June, there were a total of 96 additional units opened since the 1999 Status report.

Source: City of Calgary. *The Community Action Plan: Reducing Homelessness in Calgary: Performance Measures*. 2000. Available from: Web site **www.gov.calgary.ab.ca/community/homelessness/cplanint.htm**

Potential Problems and Solutions

The strategy could have complicated reporting requirements.
Because of the potential range of tools involved in an affordable housing strategy and the wide array of stakeholders that may be involved, reporting on progress can be very complicated. Fortunately, the use of computer technology can help address this complexity by co-ordinating and linking data bases as necessary. Relevant data can be extracted from the baseline information and updated for presentation to different audiences for different purposes.

It takes time, effort and financial resources.
A monitoring strategy can represent a substantial investment of time, energy and money and it may be difficult to convince political leaders to invest resources in monitoring programs. Resource needs can be minimized by planning the monitoring program from the very beginning of the strategy development process. Where resources are not available to collect data on a comprehensive set of performance measures, select the key measures that reflect progress on implementing a range of tools. Finally, a scaled-down monitoring program could be piggy-backed onto the data gathering process usually associated with updating a community plan.

Some objectives are hard to measure.
Some elements of the strategy may have objectives that don't lend themselves to clear measures against which to assess performance. In these cases, consider using a qualitative evaluation, for example, anecdotal evidence or narratives of what was accomplished and who benefited. If personal stories were used in the communication campaign when developing the strategy, the monitoring program could update these stories as evidence of meaningful results.

Checklist for Success

Co-ordinate your monitoring system with that of your partners.
Various levels of government, donor agencies, and other partners may have their own monitoring and reporting requirements. As well, monitoring related to affordable housing will be linked to the activities of other municipal departments or functions such as planning, growth management and social services. A system should be set up which satisfies all reporting requirements. Duplication should be avoided.

Integrate the monitoring program with the development of the affordable housing strategy.
The monitoring plan needs to be integrated with the needs analysis, action plan formulation and implementation stages in developing the municipality's affordable housing strategy.

Be flexible.
When an ideal performance measure or indicator is not available, find one that is a good compromise and move on.

Be consistent.
The set of performance measures should be kept the same over a reasonable period of time to enable the assessment of year-to-year progress.

Be results oriented.
A monitoring framework changes a municipality's whole outlook. Results become the focus, not the activities conducted in the past. Regularly tune your implementation plan to respond to current needs.

Don't reinvent the wheel.
Mistakes and duplication of effort can be avoided by collaborating with other municipalities also involved in an affordable housing strategy-monitoring program. See what they have used as performance measures and the targets they have set. Get copies of the vehicles they use to communicate progress.

Put monitoring into a proper perspective. Not every positive outcome from an affordable housing strategy can be measured: in many cases, there are intangible benefits to a project or program. For instance, in developing a partnership program, the local network of housing stakeholders may be substantially strengthened through the series of meetings and regular communication such a partnership usually entails. Even if the partnership agreement does not reach its stated objectives, the relationships that were forged may lead to more concrete benefits (for example, in the form of a new project) years down the road.

Resources

- City of Toronto. *Report Card on Homelessness,* 2001. This is a 70-page report including sections on the state of homelessness, current housing initiatives, conclusions and recommendations. A short version is available in a table format in the City's housing newsletter.
  Available from the City's Web site **www.city.toronto.on.ca/housing/index.htm.**

- Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. *Progress Report on Creating Community Solutions: An Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Ottawa-Carleton,* 2000. Reports on each strategic issue (forming 22 recommendations) including progress to date, outcomes, and further action.
  Available from Client Service Centre, City of Ottawa, tel.: (613) 580-2424.

- National Federation of Housing Associations. *Using Performance Indicators: A Good Practice Guide for Housing Associations,* 1991. Provides advice on the development and use of performance indicators.
  Available from the Canadian Housing Information Centre, tel.: (613) 748-2229.

- Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. *Municipal Performance Measurement Program: A Handbook,* January 2001. Describes Ontario's new performance monitoring system and provides information on selecting performance measures and setting up a monitoring system. Uses examples from a variety of policy areas.
  Available from Central Municipal Services Office, tel.: 1 800 668-0230.

- Planning Department, City of Regina. *Monitoring of housing and land development.* Example of a monitoring system for housing and other issues linked to community plan implementation. Updated annually.
  Available from the Urban Planning Division, City of Regina, tel.: (306) 777-7551.

- Planning Department, City of Niagara Falls. *Housing Monitoring Report,* 1994. Provides an example of the type of monitoring reports that were undertaken in Ontario in the early 1990s in response to the provincial policy statement on housing. Covers land supply, range of housing types, housing affordability and processing applications. Information is also presented on residential building trends and forecasts, the resale housing market and vacancy rates. Can be ordered from ICURR (for member municipalities only) at their Web site **www.icurr.ca/english/**
  tel.: (416) 973-1326.

- Bureau of Housing and Community Development, City of Portland. 1) *Status Report on Homelessness and Affordable Housing Initiatives,* July 2000. 2) 2000-2005 *Consolidated Plan Information,* 2000. 3) 1998-1999 *Consolidated Annual Performance Report,* 2000. 4) *Target Area Report,* 2000. The City of Portland has considerable experience with strategy development, performance measures and monitoring.
  All reports are available at Web site **www.ci.portland.or.us**

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